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U.N. chief meets GCC ministers

NICOSSIA (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar met the head of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) as well as Gulf ministers holding talks on regional security in Jeddah. Mr. Perez de Cuellar arrived in the Saudi Red Sea port Friday from Iran and held talks with King Fahd. No details of their talks have been disclosed. On Saturday, the OIC said the group's secretary general, Hamed Al Ghabed, discussed with the U.N. chief relations between the two organizations and the latest regional and international developments. An OIC statement sent to Reuters quoted Mr. Ghabed as reiterating his support for Mr. Perez de Cuellar's efforts to settle the Afghan problem. He said the OIC, which represents the world's Muslims, was ready to play a more active role in the search for a political solution in Afghanistan. The U.N. chief is expected to urge the Saudis to halt arms supplies to the Afghan guerrillas. The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), monitored in Cyprus, said Mr. Perez de Cuellar also held talks with the foreign ministers of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Yemen to issue new currency

SANAA (R) — Yemen, united after 300 years of separation 16 months ago, will soon issue a new currency, banking sources in Sanaa said Saturday. The sources gave no date but said new rial bills were being printed in Britain to replace the riyals of what used to be North Yemen and dinars of the former South. Both are still legal tender. One dollar at the present official rate is equivalent to 12 riyals and 0.4613 dinars. The sources did not know what the new rate would be. The Marxist South and conservative North merged in May 1990 to form the Arabian Peninsula's most populated country. On Saturday, Yemeni Prime Minister Halder Abu Baker Al Attas received the head of the International Monetary Fund's Middle East department, Abdul Shakour Shamlan, who is currently visiting Yemen. Radio Sanaa said the two officials discussed the country's needs and its relations with the IMF. It gave no details. Iraq's finance minister, Majeed Abed Jassar, also arrived in the Yemeni capital to discuss bilateral cooperation with his counterpart Elwi Seleh Al Salami, the official Yemeni news agency Saba reported.

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Private bank approved in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Approval has been given for Iraq's first private bank for 27 years, the Iraqi Chamber of Commerce said. It said that the Dajlah (Tigris) Bank would have an operating capital of 100 million dinars — \$310 million at the official rate of exchange. A preparatory committee which has been examining the proposed bank's operating ability since Tuesday said its creation would enhance investment in Iraq. The Revolution Command Council issued a law in July allowing private commercial banks to open. All banks were nationalized in 1964. Iraq's banking system at present consists of the central bank, the sole bank of monetary issue, and two state-run banks, the Rashid and the Rafidain.

Tunisia holds bye-elections Oct. 13

TUNIS (R) — Officials said Saturday bye-elections would be held on Oct. 13 to fill nine vacant seats in parliament. President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali said last week he would allow only opposition parties to field candidates for the seats. The ruling party, the Democratic Constitutional Assembly (RCD), has always had a monopoly in the 141-seat chamber of deputies. The Socialist Democrats Movement (MDS), the main opposition party, has announced it will not take part in the bye-elections, saying "the political, media, legal and administrative conditions for credible elections," had not been fulfilled. The government has not yet responded to the MDS decision. Five smaller opposition parties were due to announce their decisions over the weekend. The bye-elections will be held in two constituencies and in Sousse, Jendouba, Le Kef, Tataouine, Monastir and Nabeul.

EC hails U.S.-Soviet agreement to halt Afghan arms supply

THE HAGUE (AP) — The European Community (EC) on Saturday praised the United States and the Soviet Union for agreeing to cut off arms supplies to war-torn Afghanistan. The EC said in a statement it believes the move will help bring an end to the 13-year Afghan civil war, clearing the way for "elections and for a lasting political settlement." The EC's one-voice reaction to the U.S.-Soviet announcement, made Friday in Moscow by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, was issued on behalf of the EC by the Dutch Foreign Ministry. The Netherlands currently holds the rotating EC presidency. In their joint declaration, Mr. Baker and Mr. Pankin urged other nations to halt arms shipments to Afghanistan, but a Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesman could not estimate the extent of EC nations' arms trade with the country.

4 Moscow policemen killed in two weeks

MOSCOW (AP) — Moscow police are considering going on strike after four police officers were killed in the line of duty in the past two weeks, the main Moscow daily reported Saturday. The growth of uncontrolled private business, the formation of Mafia-like bands and massive corruption have led to a sharp rise in Moscow's crime over the past two years. Many Moscovites now fear to venture out after dark. At the same time, political disputes have left Moscow's police force effectively without a chief for months. The daily Moskovskaya Pravda revealed that four police officers had died on Moscow streets in the past fortnight. It blamed the underworld for all four deaths. The most recent killing occurred last week when M. Pravyduk was found shot in the chest by a colleague going home in the early hours of Wednesday. An ambulance took an hour to reach the wounded officer, who died at a hospital three hours later. A 37-year-old member of a private cooperative was charged with killing Lieutenant Pravyduk with a bullet from a homemade, small-caliber pistol, Moskovskaya Pravda said.

Baathist Party replaces Hammadi with Zubaidi

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq's ruling Baath Party has replaced Prime Minister Saddam Hammadi, the highest-ranking Shiite Muslim in the cabinet, and replaced him with a deputy, Iraqi media reported Saturday. The party's 10th regional conference also removed Dr. Hammadi from the Revolution Command Council (RCC), the body through which President Saddam Hussein rules Iraq, and reelected President Saddam as the Baath Command's secretary-general, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said. The steps Friday seemed to indicate a conflict within the Iraqi leadership, but also made clear that President Saddam remained in charge. The official agency quoted Iraqi Television as saying at dawn Saturday that President Saddam presided over a meeting of the party's new command. President Saddam signed the decree removing Dr. Hammadi after the premier's removal by the Baath conference, INA said. Dr. Hammadi was appointed six months ago as both Shiites and Kurds were rebelling just after the Gulf war. At the time, the appointment of a Shiite from the holy city of Karbala was seen as an attempt to mollify the Shiites. Dr. Hammadi is an American educated economist who is known as an advocate of political reform. He pressed for an end to Iraq's eight-year war with Iran long before the conflict was stopped in 1988. The news agency said Dr. Hammadi was replaced by Deputy Premier Mohammad Hanza Ali Zubaidi. It said that Hassan Ali Nassar also was removed as a member of the Revolution Command Council. The new command council has 16 members in addition to President Saddam, INA said. The deputy secretary-general is Izzat Ibrahim, it said. Among the members are Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, who became well known during the Gulf war, and Ali Hassan Al Majid, a cousin of President Saddam. INA said that a new political statement from the Baath Party regional conference will be issued in the next few days, along with a speech that President Saddam made to the conference.



Saddam Hammadi

Dr. Hammadi's dismissal was due to lack of support in the Baath Party elections, television and radio reports of the meeting said. "In the light of the results of the elections endorsed by the 10th regional congress of the Arab Socialist Baath Party... the RCC decided the following: RCC member Dr. Saddam Hammadi shall be relieved of his membership of the council," Iraqi radio said. The Baath Party was the only political group allowed to operate in Iraq until the RCC this month approved legislation permitting

British hostage expected to be freed today; American to follow

JIBSHEET, Lebanon (Agencies) — A pro-Iranian cleric said Saturday a British hostage would be released within 24 hours and a Muslim fundamentalist source said an American may follow him to freedom. Sheikh Ahmad Taleb, who succeeded Hizbollah (Party of God) cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obaid as spiritual leader of Jibsheet following Sheikh Obaid's kidnapping by Israel in 1989, told Reuters the hostage would be a Briton. "Despite the continuing detention of Sheikh Obaid (a Western) hostage will be released very soon so there will be no pretext for the others (Israel) to freeze the solution for this crisis," he added, saying the hostage would be freed within 24 hours. Two Britons are among up to 10 Westerners held hostage in Lebanon. They are Terry Waite, the Church of England envoy who was kidnapped in January 1989, and former World War II fighter pilot Jack Mann, who was seized in May, 1989. The pro-Iranian Revolutionary Justice Organisation (RJO) said Thursday it held Mr. Mann, 77, and issued a photograph of him to authenticate a statement welcoming Israel's release of 51 prisoners Wednesday. Summi Mann returned to Beirut Friday from London in hopes her husband would be the next to be freed. Sheikh Taleb said a condition for the hostage crisis being resolved was that Israel should agree to release Sheikh Obaid "otherwise Israel will be responsible for blocking a solution to this issue." Referring to Israel's release of the 51 Arabs Wednesday, he said: "The initiative by Israel to release the prisoners was incomplete... it was expected that the Israeli initiative would (have) come by releasing Sheikh Obaid." Sheikh Obaid is the most prominent of hundreds of Arab prisoners held by Israel and the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA). The kidnappers, who freed Briton John McCarthy and American Edward Tracy a month ago, say Sheikh Obaid should be among the first prisoners to be released. But Israel wants to keep him to ensure the return of six Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon or their remains.

A Muslim fundamentalist source close to the problem said an American could also be released soon if the pro-Iranian kidnappers received guarantees from Israel that Sheikh Obaid would be among the next batch of prisoners freed by the Jewish state. "There could be a release of an American hostage as well as the British," said the source, who declined to be identified. "If an American comes out this means the talks about Obaid would be over with the next group," he said. "Israel would have guaranteed Obaid would be in the next group." Five Americans are held hostage in Lebanon including Terry Anderson, kidnapped in March 1985 and the longest-held captive. Nabih Berri, leader of the Shiite Muslim Amal militia, said a Westerner held in Lebanon would soon be freed and the Middle East hostage crisis would be over within two to three months. Asked if he expected the next move from Israel with another

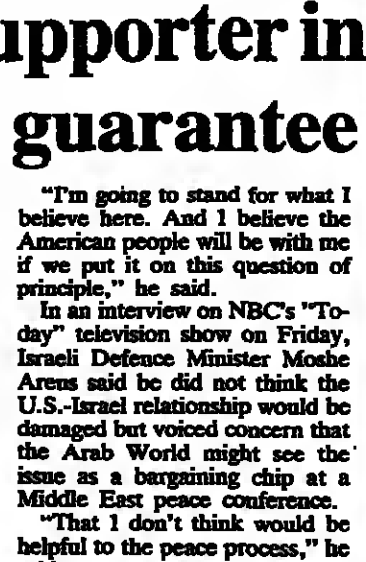
Investigators question Gorbachev; Baker pledges aid to Baltic states

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Mikhail Gorbachev answered questions for two hours Saturday about last month's coup, becoming the first Soviet leader to face interrogation in a criminal case. The niece of Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin called for a referendum to decide on the fate of his embalmed body, fueling a row between liberal reformers and remnants of the disgraced Communist Party. In the Baltics, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker promised the three newly-independent states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia \$14 million in aid to support their emerging democracies. Tension continued to run high on the Soviet Union's southern rim in the republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan. In a letter to Pravda, Olga Ulyanova sharply criticized a proposal by liberals to move the embalmed body of Lenin, who died in 1924, from its Red Square mausoleum and bury him in St. Petersburg alongside his mother. "The grave... would become a place for jeering on the ashes of Vladimir Lenin," Ms. Ulyanova wrote. "A decision about moving

the body of V.I. Lenin can be taken only by a countrywide referendum." The marble tomb housing Lenin's corpse became a communist shrine visited by countless millions after it was built in 1929. Removal of his body would deal a huge symbolic blow to the disgraced Communist Party, whose activities were suspended by President Gorbachev after last month's failed coup. The controversy is due to come to a head on Oct. 2 at the first session of the Supreme Soviet under the new post-coup power structure, dominated by individual republics. In the breakaway Republic of Georgia, the nationalist leadership, under fire from intellectuals and students, postponed the start of the school year. Georgian authorities also banned publication and distribution of Soviet newspapers as organs of a "hostile state." The republic's capital Tbilisi has been the scene of daily demonstrations for and against President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, an ardent nationalist who seeks to take his volatile republic to independence from the Soviet Union. His critics accuse him of repres-

Bush gets powerful supporter in row over Israel loan guarantee

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush's public campaign to hold up \$10 billion in loan guarantees to Israel has gained a powerful supporter with Senator Robert Byrd urging the Senate to head the president's request for delay. The West Virginia senator, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, which controls all spending bills, said in a Senate speech Friday, "Let's give the president a chance on this one. Let's give him, at least, the benefit of the doubt." Mr. Bush has called for a four-month delay in congressional action on U.S. government guarantees of loans that Israel is seeking to help it accommodate a huge influx of Soviet Jews. In doing so, Mr. Bush has taken on the powerful pro-Israel lobby, which on Thursday coordinated 1,200-strong grassroots campaign by Jewish groups to persuade members of Congress to support the guarantees. Mr. Byrd, the Senate's most senior Democrat, echoing words used by Mr. Bush in a Thursday news conference, said the Senate's chief concern was to take action that would harm the prospects for an Arab-Israeli peace conference. Referring to the U.S. role in the Gulf war, Mr. Byrd said: "Those who seem anxious to throw a peace conference into confusion and risk its fragile prospects ought to remember the commitments we have just fulfilled to Israel, to stability and peace in the region." Mr. Byrd said he did not believe that 120 days was an unreasonable period to wait to allow the peace process to go forward. The confrontation between Mr. Bush and the pro-Israel lobby has raised fears among Israel's supporters in Congress of damage to U.S. ties with the Jewish state. They are seeking a compromise. Mr. Bush's stance is said to stem from his deep opposition to Israel's aggressive policy of settling Jews in the occupied West Bank, which could eventually make it impossible for Israel to concede any territory as part of a peace settlement. "I'm up against some powerful political forces but I owe it to the American people to tell them how strongly I feel about deferral," Mr. Bush told reporters Thursday.



George Bush

"I'm going to stand for what I believe here. And I believe the American people will be with me if we put it on this question of principle," he said. In an interview on NBC's "Today" television show on Friday, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens said he did not think the U.S.-Israel relationship would be damaged but voiced concern that the Arab World might see the issue as a bargaining chip at a Middle East peace conference. "That I don't think would be helpful to the peace process," he said. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Friday that the issue was a matter between Congress and the U.S. administration. "At this moment the struggle is internal, between congressmen who support and who express understanding of the needs of Israel, and the administration," Mr. Shamir told reporters upon his return from France. His remarks made a showdown between Israel and its powerful lobby in Washington on one side, and the Bush administration on the other, appear almost inevitable.



Yitzhak Shamir

view on both sides that neither stands to gain from the confrontation. If Mr. Bush vetoes congressional approval of the aid, as he has said he would, he risks losing Jewish support for his reelection campaign. Even if Israel defeats Mr. Bush, the battle is sure to have a lasting negative effect on relations between the two countries. But Israeli government sources say privately that Israel cannot back down on this issue even if it means losing in Congress. (Continued on page 5)

Mideast peace conference is 'within grasp' — Djerejian

WASHINGTON (USIS) — President Bush should be supported in his request for a "pause for peace" in the Middle East, Edward Djerejian, the president's choice to be the next assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, told the U.S. Senate Friday. Testifying at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations committee, Mr. Djerejian said the president's request to defer consideration of Israel's request of a \$10,000 million housing loan guarantee for 120 days "is about peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors." "The prospects of launching a peace conference are within our grasp and should not be missed," he said. "The president feels very strongly about this issue." "It is the president's view, and that of his advisors, that to enter into a debate on this issue could threaten the peace process," Mr. Djerejian said. In a prepared statement to the committee, Mr. Djerejian stressed that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security "is unwavering." He added, "We are equally resolved to work for a comprehensive and durable peace settlement between Israel and its Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians." "A peace conference which will bring all the parties to the table for the first time is at hand," he said. "We are working on a timetable to put together a peace conference as quickly as possible." Mr. Djerejian, a career diplomat who for the past three years served as ambassador to Syria, said that the president, in his Sept. 12 press conference, noted

the amount of hard work that has gone into the U.S. peace effort. "I can witness personally to the extensive work that Secretary of State James Baker did in Damascus in order to get Syria to the peace conference table and open up the prospect of direct negotiations between Syria and Israel," he said. Mr. Djerejian said he was directly involved in those negotiations, as well as in the talks between President Bush and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. "The negotiations were extensive, they were very difficult," he recounted. One meeting between Mr. Baker, President Assad and the Syrian foreign minister lasted nine hours and 45 minutes, he said, adding that the progress made in those talks laid the foundation for the upcoming

Islamists under attack — Shbeilat

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Islamic movements in Jordan believe they are being targeted by the government through arrests made against an Islamic group that calls itself "Prophet Muhammad's Army," an Islamic deputy said Saturday. Independent Islamist deputy Laith Shbeilat contended at a press conference held in his office that the government was targeting all the Islamic religious groups to obstruct their efforts to reject the ongoing peace process in the Middle East. Mr. Shbeilat specifically referred to the government crack-down on "Prophet Muhammad's Army" and said although he did not know anything about the group he saw it as an example of what he described as the government campaign against Islamic groups. "We are all targeted..." he said. Over 150 alleged members of the group were arrested since July and the government said the group was responsible for several attacks, including two car-bomb explosions which crippled two people. Many of the arrested were released subsequently, and Interior Minister Jawad Shoul said early this month that 18 remained in detention and they would soon be put on trial at the state security court. "There is no doubt that we are all targeted because we are the major obstacle to the peaceful solution — the solution of surrender," Mr. Shbeilat claimed. The Islamic movements, the largest of which is the Muslim Brotherhood, reject the U.S.-brokered Middle East peace process. They do not recognize the existence of Israel and strongly believe that all of Palestine must be liberated through jihad (holy war).

Nepalese soldier killed in S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Unidentified gunmen killed a Nepalese soldier with U.N. peacekeeping forces in South Lebanon Saturday, one day after a Swedish soldier was killed by Israeli-backed militiamen. The gunmen also wounded one Nepalese soldier when they opened fire on a U.N. patrol which challenged them just west of the village of Yater, a U.N. spokesman said. "The Nepalese soldiers returned fire and one gunman was killed," added Timur Goksel, spokesman for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). UNIFIL has recently increased its presence and patrols in the Yater area, one kilometer north of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, after several violent incidents, he said. Israel Radio said the guerrilla squad was on its way to launch a Katyusha rocket into Israel, but Mr. Goksel denied the report. "There was a report of an explosion, but it was probably from a RPG (rocket propelled grenade)," he said, adding that no Katyushas were found. The killing of the Nepalese soldier brought the UNIFIL death toll in Lebanon to 182 since the nine-nation peacekeeping force was set up in 1978 after an Israeli incursion into the south. A Swedish soldier was killed and five peacekeepers were wounded Friday when the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) fired on guerrillas holding 12 UNIFIL soldiers hostage. The guerrillas were on their way to Israel in rubber dinghies

when Israeli gunboats chased them ashore near UNIFIL headquarters in the southern Lebanese village of Naqura. Mr. Goksel said the SLA ignored requests not to attack during negotiations to free the hostages. The SLA said it was acting in "self defence" when it opened fire on a but where the captives were held. One guerrilla was killed and two guerrillas, one wounded, surrendered to the SLA and Israeli troops after shooting. The U.N. Security Council was told three other guerrillas captured by UNIFIL before the hostage-taking said they had come from Cyprus to attack Israeli military targets. The three guerrillas were handed over to the Lebanese army.

Iraq: U.S. committed 'odious crimes' in war

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Baghdad accused the United States Saturday of committing "odious crimes" during the Gulf war including the burial alive of Iraqi troops. The U.S. Defence Department said Thursday that many Iraqi troops were buried alive in trenches by U.S. tanks fitted with ploughblades in a key assault during the final days of the six-week war. "The United States has committed another odious crime that will remain a mark of disgrace in its history," the Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted an information ministry spokesman as saying. "American warplanes had also bombed for four consecutive days tens of thousands of retreating Iraqi troops with air fuel bombs... which are described by experts as small nuclear bombs," he said. Thousands of Iraqis were trapped by allied aircraft and armour as they tried to withdraw on the main highway from Kuwait to Iraq in the final days of the war. The (U.S.) military and political objective of Iraq's withdrawal from

Kuwait had been achieved after Iraq declared its acceptance of (U.N.) Security Council resolutions," he added. Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said that many Iraqis were buried by the tanks, declining to confirm or deny published reports that it could have ranged from hundreds to thousands. "There is no provision in the Geneva convention that would prohibit this operation," he said, adding "war is hell." Neither Iraq nor the Pentagon have provided any official estimate of Iraqi deaths during the war. The U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency said at one point that up to 100,000 Iraqi troops could have been killed and up to 300,000 wounded in the war, but said that estimate was a vague guess at best.

general to raise by 50 per cent the amount of oil Iraq could market. The resolution, circulated among council members Friday, has been approved by the major powers and leaves in place the originally agreed quantity of oil which Iraq could sell for its emergency needs and pay Gulf war debts over a six-month period. It is due to be discussed by council members Wednesday and adopted before Friday, allowing Iraqi oil to reach international markets for the first time since a trade embargo was imposed 13 months ago when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Differences between Western nations and Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar were smoothed over in his report last week as well as in the resolution. His report did not insist the council authorize an immediate increase in Iraqi oil sales and the draft resolution reaffirms the council's intention "to review this sum on the basis of its ongoing assessment of the needs and requirements." But his report made clear that new U.N. assessments of Iraq's emergency

(Continued on page 5)

Pakistan gives cautious welcome to Afghanistan arms agreement

TEHRAN (AP) — Pakistan has welcomed Friday's U.S.-Soviet agreement to stop supplying arms to combatants in Afghanistan as "a move in the right direction" but said it would have been better as part of an overall peace package.

Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan, visiting Iran with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, said Pakistan has always wanted such an accord to be linked with a ceasefire between rebels and the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

"The fact that it emerged without the package does make it a little bit difficult," he told reporters.

"But it is a move in the right direction. We feel that anything that moves in the direction of a political settlement is good and would be a help and an impulse to the political process."

Mr. Khan said Pakistan now hoped that a settlement would emerge by the beginning of January, when the arms cut-off is due to take effect.

"We feel the next three months are very vital," he said. "We hope we can put things together in this time."

Pakistan, host to three million Afghan refugees and seven prominent guerrilla groups, will play a key role in any Afghan settlement.

It has declared support for a five-point peace plan launched in May by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, which provides for a ceasefire, interim government and free elections.

Mr. Khan said it was too early to say if Pakistan would itself cut off arms supplies to the rebels.

He denied that Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who met the Pakistani president in Tehran Thursday, had asked Islamabad to do so.

And he dismissed claims in Tehran this week by Sibghatullah Mojadedi, a moderate leader of

the Mujahadeen guerrillas, that elements in the Pakistani government had backed an alleged plot by hardline guerrillas to attack Kabul and spark a coup there.

"I would discount that altogether," Mr. Khan said. "I can tell you this is not so at all."

Opponents in the Afghan civil war also welcomed the U.S.-Soviet agreement, but the rebels said they would continue fighting the government.

Afghan President Najibullah told a cabinet meeting the agreement was "a significant and valuable step," the official Kabul Radio said.

Two major guerrilla parties based in Pakistan also welcomed it and called for strict implementation, saying the arms cutoff would hasten the collapse of Mr. Najibullah's government.

Conversely, senior government sources in Kabul said they hoped the agreement would increase pressure on guerrillas for a political settlement of the 13-year-old conflict.

They said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, key backers of the Mujahadeen along with the United States and Iran, must also cut their supplies.

Earlier TASS news agency said Mr. Najibullah has welcomed "with open satisfaction" the agreement announced in Moscow by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin.

TASS quoted Soviet Foreign Ministry officials as saying Mr. Najibullah fully backed the proposal for both superpowers to end supplies by January 1992 and called on other parties involved in the conflict to do the same.

The Hezb-i-Islami party of radical guerrilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said arms deliveries to the warring sides had amounted to intervention by the supplying countries.

"We hope they will strictly abide by the agreement in this regard and stop their interference and intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan," a Hezb statement said.

An Afghan rebel news agency quoted Mr. Hekmatyar as saying in an interview that there could be no solution of the Afghan crisis unless the Kabul government were toppled.

Jamiat-i-Islami guerrilla party leader Burhanuddin Rabbani said: "If the Soviet Union has really decided to cut off assistance (to Kabul) we welcome it."

But he rejected an appeal from Mr. Perez de Cuellar for the Mujahadeen not to attack Kabul, adding that the rebels always tried to target military installations rather than civilian areas.

Despite the agreement, guerrillas fired rockets into Kabul Radio said.

Hezb, which has taken an increasingly vociferous stance against U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, was delighted at the news of the Moscow agreement.

"We are very happy, we are rejoicing," Hezb official Nawab Salim said by telephone from the northwestern Pakistani town of Peshawar. "We all believe that Najibullah will go in a very short time in Kabul."

Mr. Salim said Hezb believed the United States and Moscow had been acting in league to prevent a fundamentalist Muslim government emerging in Kabul.

He said Mr. Hekmatyar, who is with Hezb forces south of Kabul, believed that Mr. Najibullah's hold on power would fall apart as soon as news spread of Moscow's decision to halt arms supplies.

Mr. Hekmatyar was heavily involved in a coup attempt by Afghan Defence Minister Shahmawaz Tanai in March last year and believed another attempt could be made to topple Mr. Najibullah.

U.S. envoy meets Lebanese leaders on peace

BEIRUT (R) — Outgoing U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly, on a surprise visit to Beirut, held talks with Lebanon's leaders Saturday on a Middle East peace conference planned for next month.

Mr. Kelly, assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs, met Prime Minister Omar Karami and Parliament Speaker Hussein Hussein before talks with President Elias Hrawi on the peace conference.

He refused to talk to reporters but Mr. Karami said that Mr. Kelly, a former ambassador to Beirut, had stressed Washington's backing for Lebanon at the Middle East peace conference.

"Mr. Kelly assured us that Lebanon would not be isolated in the (peace) conference and that the United States would support Lebanon with all its power to achieve its full independence and sovereignty," Mr. Karami told reporters after the meeting.

Edward Djerejian, a former ambassador to Damascus, has been nominated to succeed Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Karami said Mr. Kelly promised Washington would support Beirut in its demand for implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 which calls for an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

The Lebanese government has agreed to attend peace talks on condition that ending Israel's occupation of South Lebanon should not be linked to other issues in the Arab-Israeli dispute.

It was not revealed whether Mr. Kelly also discussed the problem of Western hostages. U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is trying to broker an exchange of the captives for prisoners held by Israel.

Five Americans are among up to 10 Westerners held hostage in Lebanon.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has assured the United States that he regards Lebanon as a fully independent state, Mr. Kelly said in Washington.

Asked if Damascus included Lebanon as a part of "greater Syria," Mr. Djerejian told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

"I specifically had raised that question in Damascus and I have been told by the Syrian chief of state that Syria recognizes that Syria and Lebanon are two distinct, independent states."

Mr. Djerejian said the United States has achieved considerable success in the last three years in getting Syria to join in efforts in the region that fulfilled U.S. policy objectives.

He cited Syrian cooperation with an agreement to end the Lebanese civil war, its cooperation in the Gulf crisis and its participation in the planned Arab-Israeli peace conference.

He said Mr. Assad was a pragmatist who realized countries in the region could no longer play the United States and the Soviet Union off against each other and that a military solution to the Middle East conflict was becoming more and more remote.

The committee was considering the nomination of Mr. Djerejian, a veteran career diplomat, to succeed Mr. Kelly as assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs.

Tehran Times expects more hostage releases

TEHRAN (AP) — A newspaper that reflects the views of Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said Saturday that one or two Western hostages in Lebanon could be freed soon, but it added that Israel should release more Arab prisoners.

The English-language Tehran Times made the prediction in an editorial a day after a visit by U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has been seeking to arrange a swap of Israeli and Arab prisoners as a key to the hostage situation.

The newspaper said that Israel's freeing of 51 Arab prisoners Wednesday was "too little too late." However, it added the gesture was a hopeful sign that "should receive a favourable response."

The newspaper also noted that "Israel should take further steps for the release of more Muslims."

On Wednesday, the Israeli proxy militia in Lebanon freed the 51 prisoners, and sent back the remains of nine Lebanese guerrillas, after Israel received evidence that one of its soldiers missing in Lebanon had died.

Israel has demanded information on the fate of seven missing soldiers before it will release Arabs whose freedom has been demanded by Lebanese kidnap groups as a price for giving up their foreign hostages.

After freeing the prisoners, Israel learned the fate of a second soldier. The body of Samir Assad was returned Friday in a deal that also allowed a Palestinian activist to go back to his home in the Jerusalem suburb of Abu Dis.

Last month, the Tehran Times proved accurate in a prediction that a British and American hostage would be freed. After an editorial in the newspaper, Britain John McCarthy and American Edward Austin Tracy were released.

The newspaper's editorial Saturday noted that the swap of Arab and Israeli prisoners and Western hostages was sensitive and complicated.

Most of those released Wednesday from the Khiam prison on run by the Israeli-financed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia were Shiite Muslims who are members of the Iranian-backed Lebanese faction Hizbol-

lah (Party of God). Hizbollah is believed to be the umbrella for factions holding the 11 Westerners missing in Lebanon.

On Friday, a leader of the group, Hassan Musawi, said that a British or American hostage could be released within a week, but he also demanded that Israel free a kidnapped Shiite Muslim cleric, Abdul Karmi Obeid.

Sheikh Obeid was seized at his home in the South Lebanese village of Jibsheh by Israeli paratroopers in 1989.

Sheikh Obeid's abduction first raised international criticism, but the stir quieted when the Israelis offered to trade him for the release of its missing soldiers and the Western hostages.

The missing Westerners are five Americans, two British, two Germans and an Italian. The longest held is American Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press, who was abducted on March 16, 1985.

"We welcome the return of 51 Lebanese to their homes along with the remains of some of their companions," the Tehran Times said.

"It is an encouraging sign and should receive a favourable response."

"While we expect the release of one or two more Western hostages soon, we expect too that Israel and its allies will also find ways to release around 400 hostages who continue to be held in captivity by them."

The Tehran Times urged Israel to release the Arabs "before the good intentions of the Iranian officials can be in any way marred," describing the issue as "very complicated and sensitive."

Iran, while denying any direct role in the hostage affair, admits to having influence with groups in Beirut.

Before leaving on Friday, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said he expected more hostages to be freed "in the next days or weeks" but declined to say if these would be Westerners or others.

"Since the U.N. secretary-general involved himself in the issue, the hopes for closure of the hostage file have become greater and the continuous Iranian efforts may bring fruitful results," the Tehran Times said.

Maghreb leaders hope to breathe new life into union

CASABLANCA (R) — Five North African heads of state meeting in Casablanca Sunday hope to breathe new life into the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), which has made little progress towards unity since it was founded two and a half years ago.

The union, which groups Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, hopes to create a free zone, a single market of 100 million, but domestic problems in individual states have held up several integrated economic projects.

The last ordinary summit was held in Libya in March. Another was due in June but was called off when Muslim fundamentalist violence erupted in Algeria and the government resigned.

Mauritania, the union's poor relations, declined the rotating chairmanship this year due to ethnic tensions and pressing demands for political reforms.

Morocco took over the chair instead at Mauritania's request but is giving its highest priority to the conflict over Western Sahara.

A U.N. peace process for the Western Sahara began with a ceasefire proclaimed a week ago and the United Nations plans to hold a self-determination referendum there in January.

Similarly, in neighboring Algeria top priority is being given to serious financial problems and the country's first multi-party leg-

islative elections due by the end of the year.

The Moroccan socialist opposition daily Al Itihad Istislahi said the creation of a Maghreb union "demands a strong stand against secessionist logic."

The union treaty stipulates that no member state will allow groups on its territory to threaten another member, but Moroccan political parties accuse Algeria and Mauritania of giving sanctuary to Polisario guerrillas.

The socialist paper said such action could cause "the break-up of the five Maghreb states and lead moreover to an advanced phase of clashes and tension."

The Casablanca weekly La Vie Economique said certain Maghreb states "continue to allow the Polisario to use their territory as a sanctuary and springboard for their media propaganda."

Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Filali told a meeting of his Maghreb colleagues in Rabat Friday that obstacles were holding up the work of the union's institutions.

He said a Maghreb common market, in theory due by the end of the century, required more efficient working methods and that the five states should put into effect decisions already taken by the heads of state at previous summits.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Libya proposes open border with Tunisia

CAIRO (R) — Libya, which opened its borders with Egypt last month, has proposed opening its frontier with Tunisia, a Libyan leader was quoted as saying in remarks published Saturday. "Libya is prepared to sign the same agreements with Tunisia as it has with Egypt ... beginning with cancelling the borders and freeing movement of people and goods," Major Abdel Salam Jalloud said in an interview with Al Shariq Al Awwal newspaper. Major Jalloud, oil-rich Libya's second-in-command, met Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali on the eve of a summit of Maghreb leaders in Casablanca. The Libyan said that following the opening of borders with Egypt on Aug. 6, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians were working in his country and a similar number of Libyans had visited Egypt. Rumours and press speculation in Cairo suggest, however, that there are few jobs waiting for Egyptians in Libya and many are sleeping rough before returning home. Asked whether Libyans preferred Tunisia or Egyptian workers, the newspaper quoted Major Jalloud as saying: "There is no contradiction between closer ties with Egypt and with Tunisia." But he added that some Libyan farmers preferred Egyptian workers because they accepted lower wages.

Four killed in Mauritanian row

NOUAKHOTT (R) — Three civilians and a policeman were killed in southern Mauritania in a land dispute fuelled by racial tensions, witnesses said Friday. They said five other civilians were injured in the clash last Wednesday near the town of Kaedi, on Mauritania's river border with Senegal, when security forces stopped farmers occupying land they claimed was theirs. The witnesses said the farmers, all members of the black Hal-Pulaar ethnic group, were refused official permission to cultivate the land and the permit was given instead to a woman from the dominant Arabo-speaking Moorish community. Mauritania's Hal-Pulaars, estimated to form around a third of the two million population, accuse the Moorish-led government of racial discrimination. Human rights organisations including London-based Amnesty International have lashed out at Mauritania's human rights record, saying hundreds of Hal-Pulaar have been tortured and killed in the huge Saharan country.

Japanese prince visits Morocco mosque

CASABLANCA (R) — Crown Prince Naru Hito of Japan Friday visited the Grand Hassan II Mosque, one of the biggest in the world, which is nearing completion on the ocean front in Casablanca. Accompanied by Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed and Prince Moulay Rachid, the sons of King Hassan of Morocco, he watched workmen installing mosaics and tiles on the walls of the building, whose main entrance rises to 200 metres. The mosque was designed by French architect Jacques Pinseau and built by the French construction company Bouygues with funds donated by Morocco's population of some 24 million. Officials say it is the third largest mosque in the world after those in Mecca and Medina and is estimated to have cost over \$400 million. The Japanese prince later toured Casablanca, the country's economic capital with a population of nearly three million. The prince was received by King Hassan shortly after his arrival in the capital, Rabat, Thursday when he was decorated with the insignia of the Wissam Mohammedi, the highest Moroccan order. He is due to leave for London on an official visit to Britain after his three-day trip to Morocco.

Buses collide, at least 10 killed in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Two speeding buses collided head-on Saturday on a highway just outside Cairo, killing at least 10 people, police said. About 30 passengers from the two buses were injured, said a spokesman, speaking anonymously under department rules. On-scene investigation was continuing, and the casualty figures might be revised upward, the spokesman said. He said he did not know how many were aboard the two public transport buses but believed it exceeded 80. The accident occurred about 15 kilometres north of Cairo on a main road linking the capital with the Mediterranean coastal city Alexandria. Police said the driver of a bus headed from Cairo to the industrial suburb of Shubra Al Khayma apparently lost control, veered to the left and jumped the traffic island into southbound lanes. It crashed into a bus headed for Cairo from the Nile Delta province of Menoufiya. The Cairo-bound bus overturned, police said, and most casualties were among its passengers.

Kuwait drills new wells, caps 429

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait started drilling new oil wells Saturday and said firefighters had recapped more than half of the wells set alight or damaged in the Gulf war. Oil Ministry officials said the Santo-Fé International, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, started drilling in several fields. "The new wells will replace those which became unproductive after being damaged by the Iraqis," one official said. Oil Minister Hamoud Abdullah Al Ragha said last month Kuwait planned to drill about 100 wells by July 1992. He said up to 30 wrecked wells had been declared unproductive and filled with concrete. The officials said firefighters had recapped 429 of the 732 wells set ablaze or damaged by the end of the Gulf war in February. The pace of recapping has picked up in recent weeks with the recruitment of more firefighters. There are currently more than 20 teams tackling the fires. Kuwait hopes all the burning wells, which are polluting the entire Gulf region with columns of thick black smoke, will be extinguished by March. It aims to produce 400,000 barrels of crude per day by the end of the year. Before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, the emirate was capable of pumping up to two million barrels daily. Kuwait, which resumed crude exports in July, is expected to start selling refined products in December.

Security Council demands Iraq allow use of helicopters

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The president of the Security Council on Friday warned Iraq's U.N. ambassador that Baghdad must allow U.N. weapons inspectors to use German helicopters or face possible punitive measures. Iraq recently has refused to permit U.N. inspectors to use three German helicopters with German crews in its territory. Iraqi officials called the use of foreign aircraft a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and offered Iraqi helicopters to the U.N. inspectors.

"I have issued a very clear warning to the Iraqi ambassador that the Security Council wants its resolutions (on cooperation) with arms inspectors) to be fully implemented," said French Ambassador Jean-Bernard Merimee, who is the council's monthly president.

Mr. Merimee spoke with reporters after meeting briefly with Iraq's envoy, Abdul Amir Al Anbari.

Earlier Friday, the council had met for closed consultations and instructed Mr. Merimee, as president, to deliver a strong warning to the Iraqi ambassador.

"There was no discussion of a possible penalty," he said. "It was not a threat or an ultimatum, but a warning ... that this situation is very serious," Mr. Merimee said.

Privately, however, other council members called the warning an ultimatum.

Mr. Anbari later told reporters: "It was very clear warning, yes, but I don't know yet the response of my government. I'm only a messenger."

U.S. Ambassador Thomas

Pickering said: "All inspections clearly have to go ahead if the process is to be made correct and that is what we demand that the Iraqis do. I think the next steps would not be so pleasant."

He declined to say what the next steps could be.

"This is Iraq's most serious breach of the ceasefire in recent months ... and it will have very serious and grave consequences if it persists," he said.

Council diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that if Iraq does not comply on the helicopter issue, it could face cancellation of a U.N.-authorised oil sale, suspension of the work of the Sanctions Committee which approves humanitarian shipments to Iraq, a blockade of Iraqi air space or even a limited military incursion.

However, the diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was no official draft resolution authorising the use of force.

They also said it could be difficult for the council to approve a resolution further punishing Iraq because Baghdad already is suffering from the effects of the Gulf war and U.N. economic sanctions.

The Security Council last year authorised the use of force to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and the April 3 U.N. ceasefire resolution refers indirectly to the use of force to compel Iraq to meet its post-war obligations.

Under terms of the U.N. ceasefire, Iraq is required to cooperate with U.N. arms inspectors directed to investigate its weapons programmes and to eliminate its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons capabilities.

U.N. teams are also mandated to oversee the destruction of all Iraq's Scud-type missiles.

Most council members consider Iraq's intransigence on the helicopters to be a violation of the ceasefire agreement.

The Security Council has insisted that Iraq permit inspectors to travel freely in their own aircraft to conduct spot inspections without interference by the Iraqis.

U.N. officials have complained that Iraq has not been forthcoming with inspectors looking into its nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic capabilities.

On Friday, an Iraqi official said the fourth U.N. nuclear inspection team to visit his country did not give a complete technical evaluation of Iraq's nuclear programme despite receiving sufficient information, the Iraqi News Agency reported.

The official implied that there was an effort to exaggerate Iraq's nuclear capability and make it appear there was an effort to conceal it in order to justify continuing U.N. sanctions.

The INA report was issued before the expected arrival of a fifth U.N. team next week.

Among its findings, the fourth U.N. nuclear team reported that the Iraqis managed to separate three grammes of plutonium, which can be used in much larger quantities in nuclear weapons, according to Robert Galucci, deputy chairman of the U.N. Special Commission charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Montague
18:30 Le Chevalier de Clei
19:00 News in French
19:15 Strategeme
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 The Simpsons
21:00 Documentary
21:30 News in English
22:30 Hunter

PRAYER TIMES

04:56 Fajr
06:14 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:31 Asr
14:02 'Akr
18:48 Maghreb
20:06 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish Tel. 810740
Assizes of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 67140
De la Sate Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 622356

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625411

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 62543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 683526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be hot and windy will be light and variable. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 21/34
Aqaba 24/36
Deserts 21/37
Jordan Valley 25/38

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 24, Aqaba 36. Humidity readings: Amman 36 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Zaid Zaghoul 638591
Dr. Abdul Fadi Tayeh 620115
Dr. Abdul Majid Al Shahr 791405
Dr. Youssef Sammour 615648
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 78236
Al Asana pharmacy 670255
Nasrallah pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Stendal pharmacy 657660

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakr (-)
Al Sharaa pharmacy 279825

ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Lawzi (-)
Khalifeh pharmacy 983417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 843590

Public Security Department 630221

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 771101

Complaints 771013

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010203

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Reception 61101

Abdullah Telephone Repair 771101

Jordan Television 774111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company

Ministry of Planning asked to develop plan for absorption of returning expatriates

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Committee for the Welfare of the Returnees has entrusted the Ministry of Planning to draw up a detailed strategy providing solutions to problems relevant to the absorption of hundreds of thousands of expatriates returning to the country from Kuwait, according to committee Chairman Salameh Hamad.

The Ministry of Planning is to work out a long term strategy taking into consideration means of benefiting from the expatriates skills and expertise in various fields and proposing income-generating projects for them, Mr. Hamad said.

He said that the strategy will then be submitted to the United Nations, foreign countries and organisations which have displayed solidarity with Jordan and offered to provide assistance to alleviate the suffering of the returnees.

Mr. Hamad, who is also secretary general of the Ministry of Interior, said he had met with Dr. Ali A. Attiga, U.N. resident representative, to discuss the situation. Jordan has been also in contact with the U.N. secretary general and other agencies affil-



Salameh Hamad
said to the world organisation over the issue.

Mr. Hamad said that the organisations underlined the importance of preparing a study that would offer assessment to the real problem and the areas where aid can be offered.

Mr. Hamad added that his committee was working in two

parallel approaches. The first entails providing immediate food and medical assistance to the needy expatriates with the help of voluntary and charitable organisations. The second involves a national strategy that would be submitted to the world organisations for help.

He said that in view of the influx of thousands of people, the Jordanian government has found itself incapable of coping with the new burdens and is expecting assistance from friendly nations and world organisations.

Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz said last week that Jordan would need at least \$4.5 billion within the next five years to cope with the huge population increase which resulted from the Gulf crisis.

His Majesty King Hussein told the European Parliament in the past week that an estimated 300,000 people have returned to Jordan, causing unemployment to soar to 32 per cent and increasing the population by at least 10 per cent.

Dr. Fariz said that more than JD 1 billion in investments would be needed to create jobs for the labour force increase. Among the

friendly nations giving help to the Kingdom was Germany, which on Monday announced a grant of \$2.85 million that would be channelled through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to help provide assistance to the expatriates.

The German Minister for Economic Cooperation, Carl Dieter Spranger, said upon concluding a visit to Jordan in the past week that his country was considering setting up a European consultative committee to study aid to the Kingdom.

In his statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Saturday, Mr. Hamad said the returnees issue is too big for Jordan to handle. It is a humanitarian issue less tragic than those resulting from natural disasters and wars, Mr. Hamad said.

Between Aug. 6 and Sept. 13, a total of 24,971 expatriates returned to Jordan but many more are expected, he said apart from those returning, the Kingdom is burdened with Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates who had been spending their holiday in the country when the Gulf crisis broke out and cannot return to their homes, he said.

Iranian official arrives with message for King

AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior Iranian official arrived here Saturday with a message to His Majesty King Hussein from the Iranian leadership.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the envoy, Mohammad Kazem, who arrived by land from Syria, would meet with Jordanian government officials to discuss regional and international issues as well as bilateral relations.

In a statement upon his arrival at the Ramtha border post, Mr. Kazem said that he was carrying a message to the King from Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Petra earlier said that the envoy would meet with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arbayyat to hand him a message from the speaker of the Islamic Shura Council. The envoy said that his visit was to the framework of ongoing efforts to promote bilateral relations.

Iran and Jordan last month signed a letter of understanding on economic and commercial cooperation. It was signed in Tehran during a visit by Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb.

The Iranian officials underlined the importance of promoting economic and political ties with Jordan.

YMCA calls for implementation of U.N. resolutions

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan was one of five Middle Eastern countries to take part in an international conference of the world alliance of the Young Men Christian Associations (YMCA), which was held in Seoul, South Korea, between Aug. 23 and 29.

Altogether, 900 delegates from 100 nations took part in the conference, which discussed numerous world issues including the Palestine problem.

Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt and Sudan were represented at the conference which expressed support for the Palestinian people's right to their homeland and called for the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 181, 242 and 338 and the idea of land for peace.

Delegates representing Young Men Christian Associations from around the world had visited the Middle East in 1989 and 1990 and acquainted themselves with the facts about the situation in the occupied Arab territories. The delegates submitted reports about their findings to the conference.

Government offices to be closed on Prophet's birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — All government departments and public institutions in Jordan will remain closed on Saturday on the anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad's birthday, which falls on the previous Friday, according to a communique issued by the Prime Minister's office Saturday.

The communique urged government and public organisations to hold religious celebrations to mark the holy occasion. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs announced at the same time that it was organising a major celebration at the King Abdullah Mosque on Thursday in commemoration of the event.

The director of the ministry's Public Relations Department, Nayef Abu Rajab, said that similar religious celebrations will be organised in various governorates.

He said that special committees chaired by provincial governors had been set up to supervise and to organise such celebrations, which would also be coupled by seminars and Islamic book exhibitions relating to the works of the Prophet Mohammad.

Health Ministry monitoring threat of epidemics

AMMAN (J.T.) — Despite the influx of hundreds of thousands of returnees in Jordan in the past few months, the Kingdom is totally free of any epidemics, according to a health ministry official. Because of the primary health care services in Jordan, which are of high quality and far advanced compared to those countries of the region, malaria is non-existent and the spread of bilharzia has been controlled through regular blood testing, according to Dr. Mamoun Maabreh, director of the Health Ministry's Primary Health Care Department.

He said that out of 80 tests conducted on non-Jordanian workers, 18 cases proved to be infected with malaria. Last year, 1,000 cases of bilharzia were discovered among non-Jordanian workers and were completely cured, Dr. Maabreh said.

In order to safeguard public health, the department has banned street vendors from selling food products, specially those near schools. Also, strict control and monitoring is practiced at school canteens in order to ensure public health safety, Dr. Maabreh said.

A survey conducted in Jordan last year to determine the infant mortality rate and those inoculated against children's diseases showed that the mortality rate among children stood at 37 per one thousand, which is equivalent to rates in developed nations, Dr. Maabreh said.

He said that 98 per cent of the country's children are covered by the Triple vaccine (DTP) and immunisation against polio and 87 per cent under one year of age are covered against measles.

Dr. Maabreh said that his department was going ahead with the implementation of a national campaign to combat diarrhoea and tuberculosis. He said that 25,000 children in the first elementary classes were vaccinated against tuberculosis last year.

In his address to the European Parliament last week, His Majesty King Hussein pointed out that Jordan was one of ten countries in the world to have achieved the fastest reduction in infant mortal-

ity rates over the past two decades. He said Jordan is two years ahead of the average rate of the rest of the world in achieving universal child immunisation.

The Primary Health Care Department conducts its operations through the health centres in various governorates. It also controls the quality of drinking water and locally produced or imported food to ensure public health safety, Dr. Maabreh said.

The department directly supervises water resources and conducts testing on water networks and sewage systems. In addition, the department conducts periodic testing on the effects of the environment on public health.

Dr. Maabreh said that, among other things, the department last year carried out testing on noise, heat, dust, chemical materials, gases and fumes rising from factories to measure their effect on human.

In addition, he said, the department gives due care to mothers and children's health through continued field visits to care centres, which number 210 in Jordan.

Writers' conference calls for end to allied blockade against Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Federation of Arab Writers (GFAW) Saturday wound up a two-day meeting in Amman by calling on the world community to help end the embargo imposed on Iraq and to save thousands of Iraqi children from death resulting from severe food and medical shortages.

The embargo has already transcended Iraq to include Jordan, which is now burdened by economic hardships and the forced migration of hundreds of thousands of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates evicted from Kuwait and the Gulf states, said a communique issued at the final session.

The statement also referred to and denounced the repeated threats levelled against Libya and repeated attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Algeria.

The meeting, which was attended by nine Arab countries including Jordan, noted in the statement that fast moving events are leading the Arab World towards a dangerous abyss and endangering the Arab World's national security, its future generations and their culture. It is also endangering the identity of

the Arab character of Palestine, with most ominous consequences for the Arab World, according to the communique.

The writers and authors expressed their concern over constant American pressures on Arab countries to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict in piecemeal fashion. The time has come for the Arab writers and authors to play their important role through utilising their creativity in the course of confronting enemy plans and urging the Arab masses to adhere to their dignity and to defend their nation and existence, the statement said.

The statement appealed to all Arab intellectuals to set up a broad national front to lead the struggle culturally and to bolster the morale of the Arab nation so as to stand fast in the face of conspiracies and to help promote democracy in Arab communities.

The Palestine issue is the central and the Arabs ought to cling hard to the Palestinian people's national rights, including their right to self determination in Palestine, the statement added.

The writers stressed the need for due respect to be given to the Arab human rights and the need to ensure for the Arab people their civic and political rights. The writers called on Arab regimes to adopt political pluralism and to enhance the process of democratic rule.

The writers issued a separate statement on human rights in the Arab World welcoming the democratisation process in Jordan.

The challenges of the modern age require continued dialogue and pluralism and respect for the human being to the Arab World so that all potentials can be mobilised in the national battle for liberation, development, democracy and unity, the statement said.

The statement condemned the inhuman Zionist practices as racist and full of human rights violations in Palestine.

The two-day meeting discussed a host of cultural issues and matters related to writer's freedoms as well as developments in the world at large.

The delegates that represented Jordan, Tunisia, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Lebanon, Iraqi and Palestine reviewed the GFAW's activities over the past six months.

Jordanian Industrial Fair ends

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian Industrial Fair, which was organised in Casablanca, Morocco, by the Jordanian Commercial Centres Corporation (JCCC), ended Thursday.

According to JCCC sources, a total of 80 Jordanian firms took part in the nine-day fair.

The sources said previously that the fair was expected to sell Jordanian goods worth at least JD 1.2 million.

The Jordanian firms taking

part in the fair displayed engineering, chemical construction, agricultural and industrial products in addition to home appliances and carpet and leather commodities. The fair was designed to sell directly to the public.

Director of the JCCC Rima Khalaf Huneidi said the fair was a real translation of the distinguished brotherly relations between Jordan and Morocco. The

fair, which was held for the second time in Morocco, comes in implementation of a 1978 Jordanian-Moroccan agreement designed to increase the volume of trade exchange between the two countries.

The aim of the exhibition, according to Ms. Huneidi, was to acquaint the Moroccan citizens of Jordan's development and achievements in industrial fields during the past several years.

Conference to stress importance of libraries to national development

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Library Association (JLA) is organising a general conference for its members next month and at least 300 librarians from Jordan and other Arab countries will be taking part in the meetings, according to JLA President Anwar Akroush.

Mr. Akroush said in a statement that the participants will discuss matters that would focus attention on the work of national libraries and the library activities in Jordan and other Arab states.

The conference, the second of its kind to be organised here since 1965, aims to improve the work of librarians and to orient the public on the importance of libraries to promote their reading habit, Mr. Akroush said.

The work of librarians is closely connected with culture and education as well as scientific research and it is hoped that the conference would draw the attention of decision makers to help give impetus to library education

to contribute to these fields.

The three-day conference is expected to review 26 working papers submitted by Jordanian and Arab librarians. Mr. Akroush said. These papers, he added, deal with national bibliography cooperation among libraries, university libraries, children's libraries, school libraries and others.

According to Mr. Akroush, the second conference is expected to begin Oct. 6.

British hostage expected to be freed

(Continued from page 1)

release of Arab prisoners or from the pro-Iranian kidnappers in Lebanon, he said. "The scenario is they (the kidnappers) will release one hostage soon."

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar remains hopeful that Western hostages in Lebanon will soon be freed despite new demands made on Israel, a spokesman for the U.N. leader said Saturday.

"We have nothing to add. The U.N. secretary-general has said he hopes we are about to make progress and to solve the hostage situation as soon as possible," said Francois Gulliani in a telephone contact with the Associated Press.

"The situation is extremely delicate. The secretary-general has redoubled his efforts to reach a solution, and we will not comment on everything that is said."

The U.N. chief said on his departure from Tehran Friday that he hoped that a solution to the whole problem will be forthcoming within days or weeks.

The U.N. chief, Mr. Gulliani also stressed, was dealing with "everything to do with the question of hostages... the release of all hostages."

John Kelly, U.S. assistant secretary of state, discussed the issue of the missing Westerners, in Lebanon with government leaders Saturday.

"The United States" government remains concerned about

the hostages and we hope for a very speedy resolution," Mr. Kelly said at the end of his talks with the Lebanese president, the prime minister and house speaker.

"We hope that our people held against their will outside of judicial processes in this region will be liberated very promptly," he told reporters at President Elias Hrawi's headquarters in Beirut.

An American helicopter flew Mr. Kelly into the U.S. embassy in Beirut's northern suburb of Ankar earlier Saturday, after which he went immediately into the series of separate meetings with Prime Minister Omar Karame, Speaker Hussein Husseini and Mr. Hrawi.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Nicaragua, Guatemala

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday sent a cable to Nicaraguan President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro to congratulate her in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian government and people on Nicaragua's independence day anniversary. King Hussein wished Ms. Chamorro continued good health and happiness and the Nicaraguan people further progress and prosperity. King Hussein sent a similar cable to Guatemalan President Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo to congratulate him on his country's independence day anniversary.

NHF to put on science exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — The Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) in cooperation with the Haya Cultural Centre will organise a mobile exhibition of science and biology in That Ras village in Karak Governorate. The exhibition, which is held as part of the NHF's "Improving Life in Villages" project, displays items related to agriculture, health, the environment and renovation of archaeological sites.

JEA spent JD 2.5 million in 1990

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) has spent JD 2.5 million during 1990 on capital investments in electric energy projects compared to JD 12.7 million in 1989, according to JEA sources. The sources said the reduction in spending was in implementation of government measures aimed at reducing spending. The JEA, the sources said, continued to carefully monitor the current operational costs and had increased dependence on local financial sources instead of foreign ones. The fixed assets of the JEA were estimated in 1990 at JD 226,300,000, according to the sources.

JCCC director receives Libyan official

AMMAN (Petra) — Director of the Jordan Commercial Centres Corporation (JCCC) Rima Khalaf Huneidi has received the head of a Libyan economic delegation currently on a visit to Jordan. Discussion in the meeting centred on ways of promoting commercial cooperation between Jordan and Libya and the prospect of holding specialised industrial fairs in Amman and Tripoli among other issues.

Medical clinic to be established

AMMAN (Petra) — A medical clinic to provide free medication and treatment for the poor and needy has been endorsed in a meeting of the General Union of Voluntary Societies in the governorate of Tafila, according to Jounhah Jaraden, secretary of the union. Also endorsed was the opening of a craft centre in the city of Tafila to market the products of the charity organisations. About JD 4,100 was distributed to the various organisations according to their activities and programmes.

Seminar to be held

AMMAN (Petra) — Water and irrigation problems will be discussed in a seminar Wednesday held by the Farmers Union of the Jordan Valley and which will be attended by the Minister of Water and Irrigation, the Minister of Agriculture and professors from the University of Jordan. Furthermore, the union has forwarded a request to Jordan Valley Authority President Talal Gazawi to pump underground water in the Jordan Valley to compensate for water shortages.

Team to conduct survey

AMMAN (Petra) — A joint team from the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) and the British Geological Survey Department is currently carrying out a survey aimed at measuring the percentage of acidity and alkalinity of water flowing from hot springs in Jordan. The study is aimed at enabling the NRA to carry out a project for exploiting ground water thermal energy. NRA sources said that 36 water samples have already been drawn from various sources and sent to Britain for lab test and analysis.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An exhibition of naive painting from Germany at Abdul Haseed Shoman Foundation Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Omar Boual at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of oil paintings and ceramics by Iraqi artists Nadim Mahdawi, Haim Mahdawi and Haidar Al Masrouf at Hotel Jordan International.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artist Salam Kanaan at the Royal Cultural Centre's Exhibition Hall.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture entitled "Legacy of Thought, Legacy of Building (Historical Train Station in Amman)" by architect Rami Farouq Daher at ACOR — 7:00 p.m.

Minister says unions must adhere to labour law

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi announced Saturday that the Ministry of Labour was determined to implement the labour law in full and to apply its rules to various unions without any exception.

The Labour Ministry is determined to open the door for all labour and trade unions to function, and accept members but no faction or worker should be deprived of membership because of its political or ideological affiliation, the minister said at a meeting with the Jordanian National Committee for the Defence of Public and Trade Unions Freedom.

At the meeting, which was attended by Parliament members

Issa Mdanet and Bassam Haddadin, the minister decided to prevent unions from holding elections until they have completed certain procedures to ensure that they abide by the labour law and its regulations.

The minister also announced the formation of a committee to recommend workers for membership in various labour unions.

Mr. Dughmi announced that the Labour Ministry would not recognise the results of the Amman Branch of Workers of the Petrochemical Industries due to be held on Wednesday. He said that that union should first adhere to the regulations and laws and should endorse the membership of all workers before ministry approval can be secured.

Jordan to switch to winter time on Oct. 3

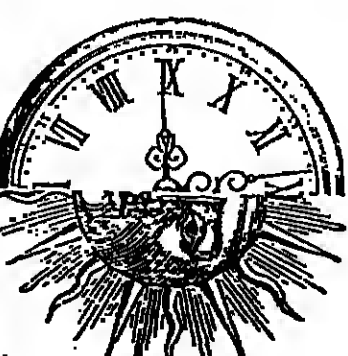
AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will switch to winter time Oct. 3 when clocks will be turned back 60 minutes to run two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

The change to winter time was ordered by the government in an official communique issued by Prime Minister Taher Masri Saturday.

The change to summer time was adopted by the government for the sixth consecutive year with the objective of conserving energy in the country, which imports its needs of fuel from abroad.

The Kingdom switched to summer time April 17. In the same month, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources experts expected that by switching to summer time the Kingdom would save as much as JD 500,000.

According to a study conducted by the ministry, between 1986 and 1990 the reduction in



fuel consumption saved fuel worth JD 327,000 each year and the total amount saved over the past five years was 44,000 tonnes of fuel worth JD 1.7 million.

According to statistics, Jordan imports about 22 million barrels of crude oil annually and the energy conservation methods are deemed necessary under the present circumstances.

Libyan delegation visits Zarqa Chamber of Commerce, discusses trade prospects

Officials agree to expand ties

ZARQA (J.T.) — A visiting delegation from Libya Saturday visited Zarqa and met with the Chamber of Commerce President Ibrahim Takieddin to discuss economic and trade ties with Libya.

The delegation toured a number of sites, including factories that manufacture pipes and cloth and held talks with local businessmen.

At a meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Takieddin said that the new era of relations between Libya and Jordan paves the way for increased economic cooperation between them and would boost trade.

The private sector in Jordan is taking the lead in finding new markets for Jordanian products abroad in the wake of the Gulf crisis, which dealt a severe blow to Jordan's exports to Gulf countries and Iraq, Mr. Takieddin said.

He added that the Jordanian government was working out new plans to support the Kingdom's production and exports of commodities and services to stimulate national industries.

The head of the Libyan delegation, Bashir Salameh, delivered a

speech at the meeting voicing Libya's interest in purchasing Jordanian national products. Libya's markets are open to products from various Arab countries and the country imposes no customs duty on imported Arab goods. Therefore, there can be no problem for Jordanian products to be sold freely in Libyan markets, he said.

Mr. Bashir invited Jordanian exporters and merchants to visit Libya and acquaint themselves with the needs of its markets.

Mr. Salameh and his delegation last week reviewed with the minister of industry and trade scopes of bilateral cooperation and means of boosting trade between Jordan and Libya.

Last month, Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Dughmi announced that the Jordanian government was holding contacts with Libyan officials over the prospects of giving employment to Jordanian nationals in Libya. Libya has employed Jordanian doctors and teachers over the past two years, which saw progressive strengthening of bilateral ties.

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Jordan should also seek American guarantees

ASSUMING that the cost of absorbing a displaced Jordanian or Palestinian returnee from Kuwait to Jordan is equal to the cost of absorbing a Jewish emigrant from the Soviet Union to Israel, Jordan will need around \$15 billion over the coming five years to cope with this burden which the Jordanian economy is ill-prepared to deal with.

If the United Nations specialised commissions which visited Jordan were qualified to assess the real needs of Jordan to face up to the disastrous consequences resulting from the Gulf crisis and the ensuing first American-Arab war, then Jordan would need just below \$5 billion of immediate funds to make up for the losses, although the exact number of returnees is not yet known.

If the preliminary study the writer has conducted to estimate the economic and social costs of absorbing some 500,000 returnees from Kuwait and other Gulf states are realistic (see Jordan Times of July 21, 1991) Jordan will need around \$7.5 billion as a bare minimum to cope with this burden which is equal in relative terms to having the United States receive 40 million emigrants in one lot.

If we rely on the extremely conservative study of the Ministry of Planning, we can conclude that the absorption of the returnees and the creation of some jobs for them will require \$4.5 billion.

It is obvious that a wide variation exists when trying to determine the cost of absorbing an extensive human wave that can add 12 per cent to the population of a country over a very short period of time. The variation is not unexpected because of different assumptions and basis, especially when it comes to the final figure of returnees that may range between 300,000 and 500,000, assuming no massive expulsion of Jordanians and Palestinians from Gulf states, other than Kuwait occurs. There are also significant differences in identifying categories of costs of absorption and in attaching prices and rates for each category.

However, it is almost evident that Jordan will definitely need to raise no less than \$5 billion to cope with the consequences of a crisis that was not of its seeking nor of its making, but came about as a result of international and Western decisions, policies and practices which rendered the international community in general and the West in particular responsible for the outcome.

The Israeli government submitted to the United States of America an application for governmental guarantees to cover losses in excess of \$10 billion. The justification of these guarantees and the underlying loans is that it needs to finance the absorption of Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union which, in the first place, should be discontinued since the Soviet Union has become a free

country and a democratic ally of America. The international community and the United States in particular, are not to be blamed for the Israeli-promoted Jewish emigration as they are responsible for the massive expulsion of Palestinians by the Kuwaiti regime which was reinstated by American forces and given free hand to violate the very basic human rights.

Under the circumstances, I recommend to the Jordanian government to submit to the United States government an application for similar financial guarantees to cover loans to Jordan of up to \$5 billion to be supported by the same justifications contained in the Israeli application.

No harm will result from such a meaningful move. The president of the United States will not even find a reason to request Congress to defer the debate over the application for 120 days because the Jordanian government is not creating any obstacles in the face of the American-sponsored peace process as Mr. Shamir is doing. The Jordanian application may be accepted and thus Jordan will obtain the capital badly needed to make ends meet under the current third human wave imposed upon the country. Otherwise some Zionist members of the Congress may be embarrassed when the Israeli and Jordanian applications are discussed simultaneously. They will reveal their double standard position.

By Dr. Fahd Al Faweh

Shamir ain't boss!

THE CONFRONTATION in Washington over Israel's demand of \$10 billion in loan guarantee is just beginning judging by the way both U.S. President George Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir are playing their cards in the game. Jewish lobbyists are massing their forces on Capitol Hill for a strategy session that aims apparently at a compromise acceptable to Israel. Israeli supporters and apologists in the U.S. Congress must have sensed that President Bush's offer to take the entire issue straight to the American people would inflict irreparable damage on their cause.

That is essentially why Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, found himself forced to call it quits in the stand-off with the Bush administration, in spite of all protestations that Israel's supporters are confident of mustering sufficient congressional support to override any presidential veto on the loan controversy. "Nobody wants an all-out fight.... Nobody wants a confrontation," Mr. Hoenlein was quoted as saying Wednesday in Washington. "We seek a compromise," Mr. Hoenlein admitted, as if conceding at least a tactical defeat at the hands of President Bush.

Deep in their hearts, both Israel and its followers in the U.S. know only too well that if the whole issue is turned directly to the American people, the White House would come out ahead in spite of all the apparent pro-Israeli body count in the U.S. Congress. There is a limit to what the American people can stomach from the audacious state of Israel especially when they realise that they would have to foot the bill at the end for the requested loan. No one doubts that Tel Aviv will default on the loan and in the final analysis it is the American taxpayers who would have to foot the bill.

That is why all the scenarios being offered as basis for a compromise between the two camps in a final bid to end the confrontation need to be carefully scrutinised lest all the gains that President Bush had been able to win dissipate into thin air.

Particularly worrisome is sought for undertaking by Washington to use its leverage with other friendly countries to grant Israel additional financial support in order to resettle the newly arrived Jewish immigrants. Also troubling is any pledge that Washington would shoulder the costs incurred by Israel as a result of the delay. Israel's insistence that there be no additional delay of consideration of the loan guarantee upon the elapse of the 120 days is so patently prejudicial to the peace process that it would be ridiculous to even think about it in the first place. In the same vein, any compromise that purports to breach the organic link between the \$10 billion loan and the projected peace talks would be so utterly naive that it stands to undermine everything that has been painstakingly done till now to cultivate and nurture a genuine peace parity on the Middle East.

The White House must remain steadfast against Israeli arrogance and make this present confrontation with Tel Aviv the real test for how relations between the two countries will be based in the future. The U.S. is the U.S. and it has to be able to call the shots in its dealings with dependent states like Israel.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily Saturday commended a proposal by the German minister for economic cooperation to set up a consultancy group to channel economic aid to Jordan. The paper said that it is a source of satisfaction that Germany is taking the lead in this concern, but it would be more helpful if the European understanding of Jordan's plight under the present circumstances were expanded to group other countries. The paper said that development and peace are two elements that go hand in hand and indeed development and stability can contribute to the cause of universal peace. In his talks with the German minister, His Majesty King Hussein emphasised this theme and called for European help to enhance peace based on justice coupled with economic development. Jordan, which is exerting all efforts to build peace and development, is calling for the implementation of the international legitimacy and asking other countries to come to its help in this endeavour, said the paper. It said that since Jordan is a factor of peace and moderation in the Middle East and since it is in need of assistance to achieve the aspired peace and justice, Europe and the world community at large should come to the Kingdom's help. Should the world community come to the aid of Jordan in achieving peace and stability, the paper added, it would offer an example of hope and new outlook for the other countries of the world aspiring for peace and stability.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily tackled the current meeting in Amman by the Federation of Arab Writers and Authors and urged the participants to turn their attention to the serious issues plaguing the Arab Nation under the present conditions prevailing in the Arab World. Ahmad Al Mulaik said that the meeting should deal with the question of continued hostile media campaign launched against Iraq, Jordan and the Palestinians because they had condemned aggression on the Arab people and the presence of foreign forces on Arab land. He said that Arab writers should refuse to succumb to the whims of Arab regimes which are considered enemies of Arab masses, should stop Israeli journalists from infiltrating Arab League meetings and should put an end to the atrocities of Arab despots against authors and writers who air their nationalist views. The Arab authors and writers should help stop the Arab Gulf regimes from violating the Arab Nation's boycott of Israeli rules, discuss means of putting an end to tampering by foreign institutions with Arab culture and should put forth a plan that can help rehabilitate the Arab writers and journalists who are being persecuted under despotic regimes, the writer added. He said that writers are creative people who can serve their nations and lead the way towards continued progress and democracy.



ANC has skeletons in closet, dissidents say

By Anton Ferreira
Renter

JOHANNESBURG — Detention without trial, interrogation under torture, the disappearance of political opponents...

It could be a litany of African National Congress (ANC) charges against South Africa's white rulers, but this time the accusations are levelled against the anti-apartheid movement itself.

Thirty-two former prisoners of the movement returned to South Africa in August, saying ANC jailers were no better than their counterparts in Pretoria. "They brought false charges against me that I was a spy for the South African Police," said one of the group, Patrick Dlongwana. "They forced confessions out of me with torture."

The prisoners were held in African states by the ANC during the 30 years it spent as an outlawed movement waging guerrilla warfare from exile against white minority rule in South Africa.

President F.W. de Klerk last year launched reforms to end apartheid and include the newly legitimised ANC and other black groups in the drafting of a new non-racial constitution.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) first tried to investigate conditions in ANC prisons 15 years ago, but the anti-apartheid movement refused access.

The ANC agreed to allow an ICRC probe only after releasing

the 32 prisoners, who it said were the last in its custody.

The Red Cross said it wanted to verify that the ANC had no more prisoners and would discuss the cases of about 50 people alleged to have gone missing in ANC custody.

"If the Red Cross wants to visit the empty prisons, they're free to do so," ANC President Nelson Mandela said.

Together with senior aides, including his wife Winnie, Mr. Mandela met 17 of the 32 in an effort to defuse criticism of the movement.

He promised all their complaints would be investigated and said measures would be taken to protect them against retribution.

The former prisoners include Gabriel Setshole, whose family wrote a letter to the Johannesburg Star naming several people alleged to have disappeared while in ANC custody.

"I'm afraid of this so-called new South Africa," the letter writer said. "We are going to have a government of crooks."

According to Mr. Dlongwana and others released from ANC detention, their experiences were similar to those of anti-apartheid activists who fell foul of the South African government.

Mr. Dlongwana, 32, said he first ran into trouble with the ANC in his hometown of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province because his sympathies were with the rival Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). A petrol bomb attack on his home killed his

mother.

"I went to Lusaka (the Zambian capital) in 1986 to meet senior ANC officials and sort out my problems," he said. "But they accused me of being a spy and interrogated me under torture."

He said that after months in detention in ANC tribunals sentenced him to 15 years hard labour on the basis of confessions extracted under torture.

Most of his time in detention was spent doing hard labour in Quatro camp in Angola.

"We had to crush stones be-

cause prison guards said that's what Nelson Mandela was doing on Robben Island," said Mr. Dlongwana, who describes himself as a playwright.

"The ANC destroyed me politically, mentally and physically," he said. "I used to be active politically, but after what the ANC did to me I want nothing more to do with politics."

He said his health had been ruined by two hunger strikes he launched to protest at prison conditions and by beatings from ANC guards. One beating has given him epileptic fits, he said.

"Sometimes in Quatro I thought it would be better to be in a South African jail."

Four other men released with him made similar allegations of wrongful imprisonment and ill-treatment against the ANC.

Most of the 32 promised the ANC they would keep silent about their experiences as part of attempts at reconciliation.

U.S. sees Castro's days numbered but fears what may come next

By Alan Elsner
Renter

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials believe the days of Fidel Castro's Cuba are numbered without Soviet support, but fear political chaos may ensue if his government begins to crumble.

"A couple of years ago, you would have said this regime is there for the duration. Now you would say that time is not finite for the continuation of the regime because it's hard to see how it could continue," one U.S. State Department official said.

He spoke shortly before Secretary of State James Baker met Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow and received a pledge that the Soviet Union would begin talks immediately on withdrawing 11,000 troops from Cuba.

It was the latest of several weighty blows to Mr. Castro, who since 1959 has defiantly maintained a militant Marxist state deep in what the United States considers its back yard 145 kilometres from the shores of Florida.

With various forms of Soviet economic aid and subsidies, estimated last year at \$3.5 billion fast drying up and with the loss of trade with former Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, U.S. officials now believe Mr. Castro's rule is ultimately doomed, though he may hang on for a few years more.

But they are worried about how a transition to a new leadership, and they hope a new economic and political system, might be effected.

Could it be a bloodless coup by senior elements of the army or the Communist Party, or might it be another Romania, where Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was removed amid turmoil and heavy loss of life?

"There's worry among people on both sides of the fence in Cuba about civil strife and bloodshed in a transition," said Cole Blasier, head of the Hispanic Division of the U.S. Library of Congress.

The State Department official concurred. "We've seen all shades and forms of what can happen. It can be peaceful, it can be non-peaceful. You can't rule out anything."

One problem is that Cuba has a relatively meagre democratic tradition to draw on and Mr. Castro prevented any sort of opposition from emerging.

The United States sees no real opposition with the exception of some small human rights groups

treading an extremely careful line to stay out of jail.

"One of the reasons that the situation is so unfortunate is we can't see any opening on either the political or economic side, particularly the political side," said the official.

"If you're going to have a successor government, you're going to have some kind of infrastructure or Democratic Party-building and none of that is there at the moment," he said.

Mr. Blasier said economic conditions were clearly going to worsen on the island as Moscow eliminated the barter arrangement under which it overpaid for Cuban sugar while providing nearly all of its oil and three quarters of its imports. Already food shortages are becoming widespread and last weekend the government even introduced tobacco rationing.

Even before last month's failed

coup, Moscow had put its trade with Cuba on a hard currency accounting basis resulting in a drastic slowdown in the arrival of Soviet commodities.

"There's no doubt that Cuba faces a bleak future in terms of Soviet largesse," said the State Department official, adding that Cuba's inefficient command economy was not capable of seeking out new forms of income.

Under these circumstances, U.S. officials intend to keep up the pressure and warn they will not permit any attempt by Mr. Castro to relieve social and political tensions by repealing the 1980 Mariel boatlift in which more than 100,000 Cubans were permitted to flee to Florida.

U.S. officials say they have contingency plans to stop another Mariel, which would probably include preventing U.S. boats from leaving U.S. shores to pick up refugees.

LETTERS

Courtesy on the roads

To the Editor:

AFTER reading and hearing about the many traffic accidents in Jordan, I would like to relate some of my experiences on the Kingdom's roads hoping that some responsible authority can find a solution to lessen the unnecessary traffic-related injuries and loss of life.

I have been living as a resident, working in Jordan for the past two years, and often drive a car in Amman and on the open roads leading to Madaba. I find there is a great lack of proper observance of traffic regulations, courtesy on the roads and common sense on the part of both drivers and pedestrians. Many people take unnecessary risks to get to their destination in a great hurry. The following are a few examples I have encountered.

There are many intersections where "Stop" signs (clearly marked in Arabic and English) are not observed. I know of crossroads where drivers actually speed through a Stop sign and frantically blow their horn at anyone who gets in their way at the crossroad. One such sign which is totally ignored by almost every driver is located in Jebel Lwbedeh, in front of Terra Sancta College.

At this intersection there are many children walking to and from the various schools in the area. It seems a miracle that more accidents do not occur at this particular location. About a month ago I noticed that the police were monitoring this intersection and issuing tickets for traffic violation to the many drivers who passed the Stop sign without stopping. I think the police ran out of tickets, because after two days they left the area, and drivers continue to speed through the Stop sign.

The lack of giving proper signals when changing lanes and following too close in moving traffic often lead to accidents. Taxi drivers in particular seem to be guilty in this regard. I have seen taxis pass me in a great hurry, only to get in front of me and suddenly stop to allow passengers get down.

Pedestrians also take too many risks when walking on or near roads. I have seen teenage boys pretend they are going to step in front of a moving car only to pull back in time and laugh when they see the sudden alert or expression of fear on the driver's face. I have also seen groups of well-dressed young ladies walking arm in arm, blocking the road, and not moving out of it, even after a polite warning by the driver who wishes to pass them slowly. This is the case particularly on country roads and in villages. In other cases passing a group of boys, one of them pretended to push his friend in front of a moving car, pulling him back in time, giving a scare both to his friend and the driver concerned.

Another dangerous practice is the storing of building materials on the roads and blocking almost half of the road. This is particularly dangerous on two-lane roads, at night, when one approaches such an unexpected obstacle with another car arriving from the opposite direction.

These are only some of my observations of the traffic situation in Jordan. No matter how well constructed the roads are, people still need to be aware of the importance of good driving and prudent behaviour on the roads, for the good of all.

No doubt the great influx of people, with their cars into Jordan, during the past few months has resulted in many problems and the need for extra caution. Perhaps some printed reminders of essential road and traffic regulations, to encourage road safety, can be prepared and distributed to all new residents in Jordan.

At the same time a greater effort by teachers in schools, to encourage proper behaviour of children on the roads, can be of some help to improve safety.

I recall a motto once used to promote safe driving: "Courtesy is contagious." I think if we can get into this habit of being courteous on the roads, we would find that it does pay.

Friar Roger Petras O.F.M.,
Terra Sancta College,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Handwritten signature: *فهد الفوه*

Peace conference 'within grasp'

(Continued from page 1)

Middle East peace conference. In response to a question, Mr. Djerejian said that one of the most important agenda items in future multilateral negotiations will be the question of water rights because of the critical scarcity of water in the region. "We will be giving a great deal of priority to this and have already

been giving priority to this issue," he said.

Speaking about key priorities in South Asia, Mr. Djerejian said nuclear proliferation is "one of our most important concerns." A U.S. objective in this regard, he said, "is to get India and Pakistan to embark on a regional non-proliferation framework."

Bush gets powerful supporter

(Continued from page 1)

The implication of Israel succumbing to what it sees as American threats over aid is too ominous, the sources said. It could create a dangerous precedent on the eve of a peace conference. For America's pro-Israel lobby

the issue is also sensitive, harking back to the days before Israel existed.

"The Jewish community in the U.S. is very sensitive... to every Jewish issue and especially to saving Jews and settling them in Israel," former Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin said on Friday.

Baathist Party replaces Hammadi

(Continued from page 1)

political parties. Excluded was the Baath Party, where only the Baath Party will be allowed to operate.

The conference followed nationwide Baath Party meetings to appoint local and regional officials.

Since the Gulf war, President Saddam has announced limited

democratic reforms and a law was passed last month allowing the formation of opposition parties. The appointment of Dr. Hammadi as a veteran politician with more than 25 years' experience of high office, was seen as aimed at tackling the country's severe economic problems in the aftermath of the Gulf war and broadening government support following the Shiite unrest in March.

Islamists under attack — Shheilat

(Continued from page 1)

"After the Gulf war, the implementation of plans to liquidate the Palestinian cause necessitates the elimination of Islamic movements in the Arab and Islamic world," Mr. Shheilat said.

He accused the government of using its crackdown on "Prophet Muhammad's Army" to discredit all the Islamic movements and to suggest to the people that Islamists were an aggressive force.

The deputy, who is a member of the Lower House's Public Freedoms Committee, said he knew nothing about the underground group nor about any connection it has to other parties, but he condemned all forms of violence against Jordanians inside or outside the country.

However, he referred to the released prisoners as "young enthusiastic men who responded to the (Lower House's) call to prepare themselves for any possible invasion from the Zionist enemy" during the Gulf war.

The Lower House, where the Muslim Brotherhood has 22 seats and 12 other sympathisers, issued a non-binding resolution in January calling for attacks on Western interests everywhere in relation to the anti-Iraq coalition's war against Iraq.

"It must be understood that we do not support, but condemn any criminal act against Jordanians anywhere. But at the same time we also condemn all moves to exacerbate the situation and give a common label to all groups," Mr. Shheilat said.

He added that if the Islamists had wanted to take part in such violent activities they would have done so "during the days of oppression."

Mr. Shheilat said he first heard of "Prophet Muhammad's Army" when it claimed responsibility for military operations inside the Israeli-occupied territories, and that he knew nothing more.

Some of the suspects, in videotaped confessions, have admitted to carrying out and plotting attacks, but they all said that they had not taken part in any operations in the Israeli-occupied territories.

"Any confession made under torture is false," Mr. Shheilat asserted, adding that he had not seen the video. Mr. Shheilat, whose parliamentary committee has just released a detailed report on the treatment of released detainees, called on the government to permit visits to the detainees accused of being members of "Prophet Muhammad's Army" by their families and lawyers.

He said that deputies had not been

Mideast arms control needs international effort

WASHINGTON (USIA) —

The United States is "determined to move in a very prudent, patient, but international effort to ensure that the peace won in Operation Desert Storm will be an enduring one," says Bruce Riedel, director for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council.

The control of unconventional weapons "is by no means solved yet" in the Gulf region, and the countries of the area "should focus on the Iraq problem" and the implementation of the ceasefire resolution that ended the war, he said.

In a recent telephone interview with Saudi journalists, Mr. Riedel pointed out that "substantial progress" has been made since the end of the Gulf war. Germany instituted more extensive export control policies, he said, and the United States and the United Nations are encouraging other countries to do the same.

"The victory of the coalition forces in the Gulf also provides us with a very special and unique opportunity to review the need for such export controls on a global basis," Mr. Riedel said during the USIA-sponsored teleconference.

"It would be prudent for all of us who have had the experience of seeing how Saddam's regime has repeatedly misrepresented itself to the international community to continue to keep the pressure on," he said. "The U.N. should be encouraged and supported in its efforts to carry out a very intrusive series of inspections."

U.N. Security Council Resolution 687 requires that Iraq identify and allow U.N. inspection of all its facilities and programmes for weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programmes.

mes. The resolution is designed to ensure that Iraq does not again become a threat to its neighbours, Mr. Riedel said.

Mr. Riedel noted, however, that "the government of Saddam Hussein has consistently misrepresented its programmes, and has engaged in a pattern of duplicity and cover-up in order to try to prevent international organisations from carrying out their mission."

Mr. Riedel said the U.N. Special Commission and the International Agency for Atomic Energy (IAEA) has successfully exposed Iraq's programmes and "pattern of duplicity and misrepresentation" in complying with Resolution 687. "The inspections have revealed the extent of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes, and its efforts to misrepresent those to the international community," he pointed out.

Resolution 707 condemned Iraq's serious violation of its obligation under Resolution 687 and demanded that Iraq provide full, final and complete disclosure of all aspects of its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction. Mr. Riedel said the United States is working with the United Nations to develop long-term monitoring of Iraq's programmes as well as its dual-use installations.

The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, all major arms suppliers, he said, met in July in Paris and agreed to a series of control initiatives. "They agreed that they would seek to find a way to notify each other in advance of any future arms sales to the Middle East. They also agreed in principle that in the future the Middle East should become a zone free of weapons of mass destruction," Mr. Riedel said.

"The July Paris meeting of the

five U.N. Security Council members underscored the commitment of these powers not to let needs of their domestic arms industries be the driving force in their arms sales policies, but rather a more important commitment to regional peace and stability," Mr. Riedel said.

"We would hope that over time, as we agree with the other four major arms suppliers in Paris, that we could move toward a process of creating a weapons of mass destruction-free zone throughout the Middle East region," Mr. Riedel said.

Nevertheless, Mr. Riedel added, "countries in the region have legitimate security needs, and they must be fulfilled through the development of conventional weapons systems in a balanced manner which will provide for the security of all those countries."

The United States seeks "to work with both the arms suppliers and the countries in the region to ensure that the level of arms is kept in a balanced and proportional way so that the security of all states of the region are enhanced. In this regard, Mr. Riedel said, "The United States is fully aware of the legitimate security needs of our friends in the region."

He noted that Saudi Arabia "has been a full partner with the United States and the U.N. in its efforts to bring about arms control and peace in the region."

He said both Egypt and Turkey have shown consistently strong support for regional stability and for the defence of the countries of the Gulf.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, have proven again and again their support of regional security and have agreed to attend as observers at the October (Middle East) peace conference and to work with the peace process," Mr. Riedel said.

Experts applaud Bush stance on Israel loan guarantee

WASHINGTON (USIA) —

A panel of U.S. experts have voiced strong support for the Bush administration's efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference next month, and for its attempt to delay action on Israel's request for a \$10,000 million loan guarantee for the absorption of Soviet Jewish immigrants.

Dean Fischer, Middle East bureau chief of Time magazine and former assistant secretary of state for public affairs during the Reagan administration, said he was "delighted that the administration has seen fit to take on" the Israeli government on this issue. "It is important," he said, "to let them know there are limits to American generosity."

The Sept. 9 panel discussion, which was sponsored by the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, also dealt with a number of other issues relating to the Middle East, including post-war security throughout the region.

The other panelists were Sandra Charles, a former national Security Council official who recently joined the International Planning and Analysis Centre (IPAC); John Thomson, a senior vice president of the Olayan Financing Company who served as commercial counselor at the U.S. embassy in Riyadh from 1983 to 1987; and moderate John O'Sullivan, editor of National Review magazine.

Pointing to the growing number of requests for U.S. aid from other parts of the world — notably Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union — Ms. Charles said it is "remarkable" that "we continue to give aid to Israel, without conditions, including the types of conditions that are good for Israel."

In particular, she and the other panelists sharply criticised Israel's

policy of allowing its Jewish citizens to settle on the occupied West Bank. Not only does this directly contradict U.S. policy, but it also presents a major obstacle to peace talks, they said.

The growing number of Israeli Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank is "very humiliating" to Secretary of State James Baker, who has described the settlements as "the most serious obstacle to peace" in the region, Ms. Charles said. She added that their very existence, in spite of U.S. protests, "challenges the ability of the United States to moderate this process."

Although she acknowledged that any peace process would be long and difficult, Ms. Charles stressed that the willingness of most of the major parties to begin talks offers an unprecedented opportunity. "Never before have we been able to get the parties to sit down for a dialogue," she said. "It is an important first step, and in some ways constitutes success in and of itself."

Mr. Fischer also noted that "no one should expect a quick, Camp David-style resolution" of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He pointed out that the Bush administration has suggested that Israelis and Palestinians engage in three to five years of "confidence building" before attempting to resolve all their differences. "Almost by definition," Mr. Fischer said, "we're talking about a lengthy process."

Nevertheless, he underlined that the proposed conference offers "the only realistic hope" for peace in the region, and noted that Israel would be a prime beneficiary of any movement towards a lasting peace.

Progress in that direction would allow Israel to focus on its

"pressing domestic problems" — including the absorption of new immigrants — "which really have not been addressed because of concerns about security," said Mr. Fischer.

Turning to security concerns throughout the region, Ms. Charles praised the administration's decision to continue to isolate Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, whose "antics since last spring... have further discredited him and his regime." Pointing specifically to the "shell game he played with his nuclear programme," Ms. Charles said that Saddam Hussein "has continued to reinforce the administration's belief... that he is not to be trusted, and that so long as he remains in power, Iraq will suffer."

She also praised efforts by the United States, its coalition partners and the United Nations to improve security cooperation among the Gulf states, as well as to exercise more control over arms sales to the region. One "key development" that will positively affect the region well into the future, Ms. Charles said, "is the emergence of the U.N. in the role for which it was created 40 years ago."

She noted that countries are increasingly relying on the U.N. for peacekeeping efforts or sponsorship of peace conferences, and offering supplies, manpower and funds to the organisation. "What this signals," Ms. Charles said, "is an awareness that force can no longer be used to end disputes, and that the burden of responsibility for preserving the new world order must be shared by many nations."

Thus, despite the challenges that remain, "the future has never looked brighter," for the Middle East, she said.

Gorbachev questioned

(Continued from page 1)

Saturday, said the United States wanted to support Estonia in its efforts to establish a vibrant free-market economy.

"We have decided to include the Baltic states as a group in programmes we have for emerging democracies in central and eastern Europe, and for the balance of this year we will be making available roughly \$14 million for the three Baltic states," Baker told a news conference.

Obey supports delay of Israel loan guarantees

WASHINGTON (USIA) —

The following statement was released Sept. 10 by Wisconsin Congressman Dave Obey, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Export Financing:

"I talked to both President (George Bush) and Secretary of State James Baker before the congressional recess and to Secretary Baker last week.

"I have expressed my strong support for administration efforts to move the peace process forward and for its request to delay consideration for additional Israeli aid in the form of loan guarantees for 120 days.

"The president's request is perfectly reasonable. This opportunity for progress in the region is in all likelihood the last and best we will have for a long, long time. It is essential that the administration and Congress act together in order to maximise American influence for peace.

"I would hope that the administration would accompany its request for delay of the loan guarantees

with a delay in arms sales to all parties in the region. We have a right to expect Israeli cooperation in seeking peace, but we also have a right to expect Arab cooperation and such a suspension in arms sales would drive that message home as well.

"I would hope that Israel and its supporters would see fit not to challenge the president's request.

"With all of the needs we have at home, the American public has had it with a lot of countries who feel that they are automatically entitled to American foreign assistance. There is no doubt that Israel will need some additional assistance. But when it comes, that assistance will not receive the public support it needs unless it is clear that the president feels it is in the interest of the United States to provide it.

"It would be extremely unwise for Israel or its supporters to press ahead for additional assistance at this time in the teeth of presidential opposition because such an effort would, I believe, result in much less public support for aid to Israel in the long term."

Syria: Loan guarantees will kill Mideast peace

DAMASCUS (R) —

Syria said Saturday Middle East peace would be doomed if Washington submitted to Israeli pressure for loan guarantees.

The official daily Tishreen said differences between U.S. President George Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir were "a test of strength between U.S. pragmatism and the Zionist lobby."

"Submission to the Israeli blackmail in the conflict between Shamir and Bush not only does destroy peace efforts but threatens the interests of the Americans themselves," it said.

Mr. Bush has pledged to veto \$10 billion in loan guarantees for Israel to win a 120-day pause for Middle East peace.

He accused some of Israel's supporters in Congress of trying to prevent him from taking steps vital to U.S. Security by pursuing Middle East peace.

Tishreen said Mr. Bush's demand for the delay in loan guarantees showed he wanted to lay a "cornerstone for the future dealing between Washington and Tel Aviv."

"The successive U.S. administrations used to allow Israel and its supporters of the Zionist lobby to decide the foreign policy of the U.S. especially the Middle

East policy..." it said.

Saudi Arabian commentators on Saturday praised Mr. Bush for threatening to use his veto over the loan guarantees sought by Israel.

The daily Al Yom said Mr. Bush's tough line against Israel "confirms the credibility and seriousness of the American administration to practise all means to impose a just and lasting peace in the region."

The official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted the paper as saying that peace in the Middle East could not be achieved if Israel insisted on obtaining the aid "whose aim is to build more (Jewish) settlements in the occupied Arab territories."

Another Saudi paper, Okaz, said Mr. Bush's statement Thursday left "no doubt that the new international order has effectively started to impose itself on new relationships."

"For the first time in its (42-year-old) history, Israel is facing a genuine challenge to its greed and continuation in its intransigent policies towards the Palestinian people," SPA quoted the paper as saying in an editorial.

"Israel should now realise that the times which it used for achieving its aims are now working against it," it added.

Israeli unemployment rate rises

TEL AVIV (AP) —

Israel's unemployment rate rose to 10.8 per cent in the second quarter this year, pushed up by the continuing influx of Soviet Jewish immigrants.

The figure, from the Central Bureau of Statistics, was the highest since a record 12.4 per cent jobless rate in the first quarter of 1987 at the end of a deep two-year recession.

It marked an increase from 10 per cent in the January-March period and compared with 10.2 per cent in the second quarter of 1990, bureau statistics indicated.

The bureau said that an average of 178,000 people sought work each week in the second quarter.

More than 300,000 Soviet Jews have arrived in Israel since 1989, when the Soviet Union relaxed exit policy.

The Bank of Israel, the country's central bank, has predicted that the rate could rise to 14 per cent unless job-creation programmes are initiated to absorb the Soviet newcomers.

Menaechem Purnush, deputy minister for labour and social affairs, said in a statement that unless "drastic action" is taken, the number of unemployed people could reach 250,000.

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Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar to International Markets

Currency	New York Close	New York Close
	Date: 12/9/1991	Date: 12/9/1991
Sterling Pound	1.7320	1.7297
Deutsche Mark	1.6840	1.6900
Swiss Franc	1.4768	1.4802
French Franc	5.7360	5.7525
Japanese Yen	137.10	134.80
European Currency Unit	1.2140	1.2150

U.S. Dollar to International Markets

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.37	5.37	5.56	5.75
Sterling Pound	10.37	10.00	9.93	9.93
Deutsche Mark	9.06	9.00	9.18	9.25
Swiss Franc	8.06	8.06	7.87	7.68
French Franc	9.12	9.18	9.25	9.31
Japanese Yen	7.00	6.50	6.31	6.12
European Currency Unit	9.56	9.56	9.62	9.75

Precious Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	344.65	6.80	Silver	4.01	.090

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Buy	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.687	.688
Sterling Pound	1.1883	1.1942
Deutsche Mark	.4069	.4089
Swiss Franc	.4646	.4659
French Franc	.1195	.1201
Japanese Yen	.5121	.5147
Dutch Guilder	.3613	.3631
Swedish Krona	.1114	.1120
Italian Lira	.0543	.0546
Belgian Franc	.01971	.01981

Other Currencies

Currency	Buy	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7700	1.7750
Lebanese Lira	.0770	.0772
Saudi Riyal	.1823	.1837
Kuwaiti Dinar	.1860	.1870
Qatari Riyal	.2050	.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7300	1.7450
UAE Dirham	.1860	.1870
Greek Drachma	.3620	.3700
Cypriot Pound	1.4600	1.5000

Fed cuts U.S. interest rates; some say economy needs more

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. central bank, the Federal Reserve Board, has lowered its key discount rate to the lowest level in 18 years but already analysts wonder if it's enough to keep the economic recovery on course.

The Fed Friday cut the rate to five per cent, from 5.5 per cent, to persuade companies and consumers to borrow and spend, to spur demand and production and to put more people to work.

The central bank also pushed down the overnight federal funds rate to 5.25 per cent from 5.5 per cent.

But many analysts say the economy may need more help, and predicted further cuts this year to help shake the country loose from its 14-month recession.

"It's not going to stimulate any great economic growth. It will prevent a slippage into another recession," said Ward McCarthy, managing director at Stone and McCarthy.

"I expect they will ease again before the end of the year," he added.

Allen Sinai, an economist at Boston Company, said, "There's just no oomph in the economy and at best it's mounting only a little, little bit of a recovery."

He predicted another cut in a month or two unless there were signs of growth and new lending from banks.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce also said the half a point cut in the discount rate was not enough.

The country's economy has shown only sporadic signs of a rebound from the recession that began in July 1990, and some fear it might be slipping back into recession.

In announcing the discount rate cut, the central bank said it acted because money supply growth was weak, inflation was moderate and it was concerned about the potency of the economic recovery.

The move came on the heels of government reports that showed retail sales fell 0.7 per cent in August and consumer prices moved up only 0.2 per cent.

The Fed's action had some immediate effect — several major commercial banks lowered the prime lending rate they give their big corporate customers. New York's Morgan Guaranty Trust, Co., the nation's fourth largest,

slashed its rate to 8 per cent from 8.5 per cent.

The White House, which has long encouraged lower interest rates as a way to pull the economy out of the recession, welcomed the move by the Fed.

"It's good news," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater told reporters. "I don't think there's any doubt that we're coming out of the recession."

Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady said he hoped Friday's move would be followed by others, adding, "It is extremely important that Fed policy support the economic recovery."

The White House had pushed for lower rates to spur the economy ahead of the presidential election next year.

But Democrats said the Fed action had been followed by commercial bank cuts in interest rates to consumers.

Charles Schumer, a Democratic congressman from New York, said the Fed had lowered the discount rate four times the past 10 months "but the big banks continue to charge outrageous credit card rates of 19 per cent and 20 per cent."

Fast legislation needed to aid decaying Soviet oil industry

By Simon Cameron-Moore
Reuter

LONDON — Russia, which grabbed control of the world's biggest national oil and gas industry from the central Soviet government last week, now must unravel the legal knots delaying urgently needed foreign investment.

"The number of interlocking jurisdictions are like the famous Russian dolls," says Ronald Freeman, first vice-president for merchant banking at the London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin said last week the Kremlin's central planners no longer had a job looking after oil, gas and the rest of the energy sources within the republic's borders.

Mr. Yeltsin has to find a way to reverse years of neglect of country's biggest cash cow — its oil fields.

Production has plunged to less than 10 million barrels per day (bpd) from 12.8 million as recently as 1988.

Another year of decline at this rate and Saudi Arabia, already pumping 8.5 million bpd and established as the world's biggest oil exporter, will be able to claim the additional title of number one producer.

The cost of getting Soviet output back to heights reached in the late 1980s would be almost \$30 billion, based on a cost starting at around \$10,000 for each barrel added to capacity, the EBRD's Mr. Freeman said in an interview.

"It's the industry they are giving the highest priority because of the need for foreign exchange," he said.

Soviet oil exports averaged around 2.3 million bpd in the first half of 1991, 26 per cent below levels of a year earlier.

Oil and gas exports provide 60 per cent of Soviet hard currency earnings and every cent is needed. Moscow has made a plea for \$6 billion worth of urgent food aid.

The Russian Federation, which accounts for 90 per cent of Soviet oil output, is willing to take on 55 to 65 per cent of the \$60 billion Soviet external debt, according to the chairman of its central bank last month.

Bankers and negotiators for Western firms in Moscow said the transfer of control of the oil industry to the Russian Republic would help clarify part of what is otherwise a very murky environment in which to make deals.

But Russia has a lot to do to get the money moving.

While Western geologists are impressed by underground formations from the Caspian Sea to Sakhalin Island north of Japan, lawyers working on negotiations for joint ventures and exploration and production concessions are depressed.

"From the Western companies viewpoint the country represents the last frontier for low cost (oil and gas) reserves. There are several Alaskan North slopes out there," said George Reese, auditor Ernst and Young's managing partner in Moscow.

But only about three oil and

gas production joint ventures are operating, although more are agreed at a protocol level.

"The de facto result of the coup's failure (last month) is that all the power lies with the republics... but we have to wait for the law to catch up with reality," said Humphrey Harrison, whose consultancy, European Energy Environment, is involved in several joint-venture negotiations.

Contract, property and tax laws need to be established.

Another problem is a tradition in Russia of including social infrastructure funding in enterprises. Oil companies are running up against demands to build schools, hospitals and housing.

"An oil company doesn't want to own a school," said Mr. Freeman, but he added that ways must be found to satisfy such needs.

Getting a legal framework in place to ease the way for foreign money could take one to two years, said Robert Scallan, director of Barclays Bank's export and projects department with responsibility for Central and Eastern Europe.

Getting the oil and gas sector back on track should take between three to five years, he added.

"I think it is safe to say that there will be half a dozen more registered by the year end," said Mr. Ernest and Young's Mr. Reese, whose company is involved in talks on 30 to 40 joint ventures.

Since the EBRD opened last April it has begun talks with about 10 major companies looking for Soviet oil and gas deals.

Strike cripples India's gas, fertiliser industries

NEW DELHI (AP) — About 47,000 workers of a state-run oil company stayed away from their jobs for the fifth day Friday, virtually paralysing fertiliser and cooking gas production.

The strike by Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) workers is to protest the killing of a colleague who was being held by separatist rebels in Assam, the northeastern state where India's richest onshore oil fields are located.

The strikers also want the government to secure the release of four other officials of the oil company who still are in the rebels' custody.

An oil company official said the government is losing 250 million rupees (\$9.67 million) a day because of the strike.

Except for emergency services, all drilling and exploration operations have stopped, said the official "speaking on condition of anonymity."

He said the country is losing about four million cubic metres of natural gas everyday, crippling cooking gas retail and gas-based fertiliser and power generation plants.

ONGC is India's only oil drilling and supplying organisation. If the strike continues, oil refineries will also have to be shut, Press Trust of India news agency said.

The Economic Times newspaper said Friday India is left with only eight days of crude oil stock. However, stocks of gasoline, kerosene and diesel will last another 30 to 40 days, it said.

Stocks of liquefied petroleum gas or cooking gas are almost over, the newspaper said.

Petroleum Minister B. Shankaranand's talks Friday with the workers to end the strike were inconclusive.

The strike began Monday, a day after the bullet-riddled body of B.S. Raju, an assistant executive engineer in the oil company, was found near a railroad track in Assam.

Mr. Raju was kidnapped July 1 by the separatist United Liberation Front of Assam. The militants had threatened to kill Mr. Raju and another ONGC official, Chittaranjan Mahanty, if the government did not release 16 jailed comrades.

The government refused.

The front wants Assam to secede from India, claiming the federal government siphons away the region's natural wealth from the local people.

Assam, also known for its tea, is 1,800 kilometres east of New Delhi. More than 250 people have been killed in Assam since the insurgency flared up two years ago.

Job losses dog British recovery

LONDON (R) — Year-on-year inflation in Britain fell to 4.7 per cent in August, according to official data released Friday which prompted Prime Minister John Major to say the problem of rising living costs had been defeated.

But growing unemployment showed that he still faces a difficult task to prove the economy is on the road to recovery after a deep, year-long recession.

The inflation rate was the lowest in more than three years and was down from 5.5 per cent in July, according to official figures measuring the retail price index (RPI). The RPI had peaked at 10.9 per cent last year after being as low as 3.3 per cent in early 1988.

Mr. Major, who must call a general election by next July, said the latest drop showed inflation had been defeated.

"I think we can be confident now that we have got inflation licked in a way we have not seen for many years," he said.

Other ministers said it was clear the government would meet its target of an RPI of under four per cent by the end of 1991, probably below that of Germany, Europe's strongest economy.

"Our rate of inflation is now below the average of the European Community and over the next few months it is set to fall further to levels comparable with the best in Europe," said chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont.

Soviet deficit could be \$333b

MOSCOW (AP) The Soviet budget deficit is likely to surpass 200 billion rubles (\$333 billion) at the official rate this year, the Finance Ministry has revealed.

The TASS news agency said the figure — almost 10 times the planned deficit for 1991 — was given at a meeting of the Economic Management Committee, in effect the transitional Soviet government, Friday.

While the amount sounds enormous when converted at the official rate used in international transactions, much of it is internal deficit. Foreigners can already officially change \$1 for 32 rubles.

By that reckoning, the new deficit would be only about \$6 billion.

Russian Federation Prime Minister Ivan Silayev, who heads the committee, rebuked Vladimir Rayevsky, first deputy finance minister, for failing to present measures to reduce the deficit, and suggested purchases of military equipment be cut to slash expenditures, TASS said.

Mr. Silayev said workers at military plants should be kept on the payroll, however, to encourage them to move to civilian

production.

Exports have plummeted this year, depriving the Soviet Union of needed hard currency to pay for imports.

TASS said the committee ordered the Finance Ministry to prepare detailed proposals for cutting budgetary expenditure.

According to the news agency, Mr. Rayevsky told the committee the 1991 deficit is now projected at 144 billion rubles (\$240 billion).

With credits from the Soviet state bank added in, the deficit will total more than 200 billion rubles (\$333 billion), Mr. Rayevsky said, according to TASS.

On Friday, the committee also rejected plans presented for keeping industries supplied in 1992, saying they provided too little leeway for a market economy, TASS said.

The remaining 12 Soviet republics and three Baltic states were asked to review the plan, TASS said.

Committee officials are trying to find ways to preserve the disintegrating Soviet Union as a loose economic association while allowing the republic and the Baltics to realise independence.

Algeria denies it tempted by debt rescheduling

ALGIERS (R) — The Algerian government has denied it was tempted to seek rescheduling of its foreign debt and said it viewed such a move as "the worst of possibilities" facing it.

In a statement, carried by the official Algerian news agency APS late Friday, the cabinet denied a Paris report by Reuters "imputing to the Algerian government and particularly its prime minister (Sidahmed Ghazali) the idea that rescheduling appears as the only solution to bring the country out of the difficulties in which it finds itself."

The cabinet added: "The Algerian government recalls that to bring the country out of the impasse of the debt, it counts first and foremost on the redeployment of the country's own resources, and it is in this direction that it has worked actively since its formation."

"In other terms, the Algerian government has always considered and continues to consider that rescheduling would be in fact the worst of the possibilities and that this solution, which Algeria has the means to avoid, could not occur unless it is imposed on it."

Algeria has foreign debt set at about \$25 billion much of it short term, and Mr. Ghazali has frequently expressed concern about the country's economic situation.

Mr. Ghazali has said the structure of the debt is "disastrous" with the debt service ratio having risen to 69 per cent from 18 per cent in 1988.

The government also criticised a Reuters report of an interview given by Mr. Ghazali on Algerian radio in which he called for the

International Monetary Fund to show more flexibility with Algeria's problems.

The cabinet statement, commenting on background on meetings between Algerian and IMF officials, termed, the report tendentious and said a visit by an Algerian delegation to Washington had produced conclusions that the Algerian government had accepted.

Invitations to companies

The Algerian state oil company Sonatrach will invite about 30 selected foreign firms next week to apply to take part in producing from existing oilfields, a senior company official said Saturday.

"This week we are going to contact (the firms) through (sending them) a number of documents to explain the procedure they should follow to enable them to apply to take part in exploitation of current oilfields," he told Reuters.

The official, who asked not to be named, said as a first step Sonatrach had chosen eight or nine oilfields where the level of recovery was highest, including Hassi Messaoud in the southeast, Algeria's biggest oilfield.

Other fields could be proposed later, he added.

Mr. Ghazali said Thursday foreign firms would soon be allowed to share in exploiting existing oil and gas fields and the law would be changed to permit this.

"In return for the right of association, they must advance money on the basis of sharing estimated higher output," he said.

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Polish parliament rejects special powers bill

WARSAW (R) — Poland's Communist-dominated parliament Saturday rejected the Solidarity government's request for special powers to issue certain economic decrees with the force of law.

It voted 196 to 99 with 32 abstentions in favour of the bill, but this was short of the two-thirds majority of 215 votes needed to pass the legislation.

The decision marks a defeat for the government in its efforts to push through free-market reform legislation and weakens its hand in the run-up to the first free parliamentary elections since World War II on Oct. 27.

Parliament has been wrangling over the powers for several weeks. Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki called his request "a kind of cry of despair when for five months I could not achieve anything in parliament."

Both he and President Lech Walesa have long accused parliament of obstructing important reforms.

Government spokesman Andrzej Zarebski said before the vote: "This is not a game. In the transition period, and during the election campaign there is a real, however still potential, threat of political chaos."

"One should see the initiative of the government in such a context."

Earlier amendments to the bill had already substantially curtailed the powers the government originally requested, limiting them to around a dozen specific areas.

Mr. Bielecki had argued for a largely free hand in issuing economic decrees to break a logjam in legislation and in particular to pass urgent budget readjustments.

But many deputies had expressed unease at granting the government even limited powers.

"The result of the vote is connected with the programme which could stand behind these powers," said Andrzej Bratkowski, chairman of the parliamentary commission which presented the law. "It is evidence of feelings of a lack of security," he added.

Late last month Mr. Bielecki offered to resign during the budget debate, when ex-Communist deputies demanded the government step down for alleged economic mismanagement. He emerged with a strong vote of confidence.

Ex-Communists and their allies have objected to tough spending cuts envisaged in the budget amendment and accused the government of autocratic tendencies.

This is the second blow to the government's radical economic reform programme in the past two days. On Friday parliament failed to confirm Marek Dabrowski, a monetarist candidate, as new Central Bank governor.

Democrats spice campaign with anti-Bush rhetoric

WASHINGTON (R) — A sudden influx of Democratic contenders in the U.S. presidential race is heating up the campaign rhetoric aimed at Republican President George Bush.

Just weeks ago, Democrats feared there would be a shortage of candidates to challenge the highly popular Bush.

Now, as many as seven Democrats have either declared their candidacy or may soon do so, and some are stepping up their attacks on Mr. Bush.

Less than five months remain until the primary season begins with party preference votes in Iowa on Feb. 10 and a primary election in New Hampshire the following week.

The party votes, known as caucuses, and the primaries, which are more like regular popular elections, will select delegates to the Democrats' national presidential nominating convention in New York in July.

When Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder launched his candidacy Friday, he did so with particularly harsh words for the president's handling of a fight in Congress over civil rights legislation designed to make it easier for blacks and others to fight job bias.

"When was the last time we had a president of the United States who went out of his way to raise the phony and divisive issue of racial quotas in hopes of turning back the clock of civil rights?" Mr. Wilder, who is black, asked cheering supporters.

"Instead of healing leadership, he offers divisive rhetoric that can only result in pitting one group of Americans against another."

Rival South African leaders sign peace pact as carnage continues

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Black and white leaders Saturday signed a peace pact to end political violence as thousands of armed Zulus demonstrated outside the conference.

Police said at least 14 people were killed overnight in black townships surrounding Johannesburg.

Tension soared when some 3,000 Zulus of the Inkatha Freedom Party, wearing red headbands and armed with clubs, spears and shields, appeared without warning outside the downtown hotel where the peace conference was being held.

Police and soldiers in combat gear with armoured vehicles ringed the dancing and chanting Zulus. The Zulus refused a police request to surrender their weapons, but there were no confrontations.

President F.W. de Klerk, African National Congress President Nelson Mandela, Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi and dozens of political, religious and civil leaders signed the pact.

"I believe that today is an historic day. The eyes of all South

Africans yearning for peace are upon us. We dare not fail them," Mr. De Klerk told the conference.

But some radical white and black leaders either boycotted the meeting altogether or said they would not sign the pact because they did not believe it would work.

Previous peace agreements have failed, and many political leaders and observers doubt the new accord can end the violence.

The pact, arranged by church and civic leaders, is intended to end the political violence that has claimed about 6,000 lives in recent years. Political leaders on all sides agree the violence must end if a multiracial democracy is to be constructed.

The agreement attempts to end violence by setting up strict monitoring controls and outlines standards for political conduct.

The pact forbids provocative statements or actions; promotes political tolerance; sets codes of conduct for political parties and the security forces; calls for reconstruction of communities hit by violence and provides for special courts to deal with political

violence.

The government and the ANC reached a ceasefire in August 1990, and Mr. Mandela and Dr. Buthelezi agreed to peace terms in January. In both instances, the violence raged on.

Mr. Mandela, in a speech interrupted several times by applause, said the ANC, the largest black opposition group, had serious doubts about the pact, but would sign for peace. He did not spell out the ANC's reservations.

"We have accepted that in an accord of this nature compromise is absolutely essential. That there must be give and take and for that reason we have come here to sign an accord," he said.

Dr. Buthelezi earlier dismissed the latest peace plan, saying he saw no reason why it would succeed where others failed.

More militant black leaders said they would not sign the peace pact because they believed the government was responsible for the violence. They said they would not cooperate with the white minority government in bodies created by the pact to end the violence.

"The accord fails sadly in identifying the causes of the violence," said Pan Africanist Congress President Clarence Makwetu. "We cannot serve in apartheid structures."

Pro-apartheid white political groups, which oppose Mr. De Klerk's moves to end apartheid and share power with the black majority, boycotted the meeting.

Andries Treurnicht, leader of the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, said his followers would never submit to "black domination." He said whites would oust the De Klerk government.

"It is not an act of treason to mobilise a nation to get rid of an undemocratic government," he said in a speech Friday night.

The meeting began with the scores of delegates standing for a minute of silence as a tribute to the people who have died in the violence, and multidemocratic prayers were offered for peace.

Police said Saturday at least 14 more people were killed overnight in fighting in black townships around Johannesburg. Police spokesman Maj. Bruce Anderson said the dead were shot or hacked to death.

Mitterrand, Sihanouk agree on Paris peace talks

PARIS (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand and Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk agreed Saturday to hold a peace conference in Paris in six weeks to try to end 12 years of civil war in the Asian country.

Prince Sihanouk told reporters the conference would open on Oct. 31 — his birthday — when a ministerial agreement on a political settlement is due to be signed.

"We are reaching the end of the tunnel. We can see the light, the sun of freedom, peace and national reconciliation," he said after meeting Mr. Mitterrand at the Elysee Palace.

French officials said Mr. Mitterrand expressed satisfaction that conditions were at last ripe for a return to peace.

A first Paris peace conference failed two years ago amid squabbling between the Phnom Penh government and the three guerrilla movements, including the Khmer Rouge, opposed to it.

Prince Sihanouk said he had worked out with French authorities a compromise on one of the outstanding issues — over which voting system to use in elections scheduled for 1992.

The guerrillas want nationwide proportional representation, while the government insists on a winner-take-all system based on constituencies.

Yugoslav army attacks to lift siege of barracks

ZAGREB (AP) — The federal army said Saturday it had attacked Croatian forces imposing a blockade on its barracks in the eastern part of the battle-torn Yugoslav republic.

The blockade imposed overnight by Croatian forces and the swift military response sharply escalated tensions as Croatia reeled from a series of major military setbacks.

A statement from the army gave few details of the military operation, but Zagreb TV reported that the city of Vukovar had been bombed by three military jets.

Its correspondent, reporting to Zagreb Studios by telephone from the eastern Croatian city, said he could see clouds of smoke in the city. The line was then lost.

The First Army District said in a statement that the blockade left it with two choices: "The first is to abandon units in Croatia to hunger and destruction, and the other is to take decisive measures to save them."

"We decided on the second option, because there was no other solution," the statement said.

"The action which we started at 1330 has a limited aim and is solely defensive in character," it said.

The military said that its garrisons in Osijek, Slavonki Brod, Slavonka Pogorza and Vukovar had been blockaded, and that soldiers in Vukovar had received no fresh food since Aug. 25.

Blockades imposed throughout Croatia deprived federal troops of food, water and electricity. The decision to blockade bar-

racks and the detention of a senior army officer after his helicopter was forced down Friday apparently were Croatia's response to a series of serious losses throughout the republic in recent days.

Croatia, and some Western governments, accuse the army of assisting the Serb guerrillas. The military repeatedly has denied it, saying it intervenes in the ethnic fighting only to separate the two sides.

By seizing the strategic town of Kostajnica and closing in on the major Adriatic ports of Zadar and Sibenik, the Serbs practically cut Croatia into three parts. One Croatian guardsman was killed overnight near Sibenik, Croatian radio reported.

Steel girder tank traps and oil tankers blocked roads in the capital Zagreb, and barracks were already blockaded in the Adriatic cities of Split, Zadar and Dubrovnik, police officials said.

Barracks also were erected in Varazdin, 90 kilometres north-east of Zagreb, Slavonki Brod on the Bosnia border, and Karlovac south of Zagreb.

The army said its airports in Zagreb and Zadar are "practically cut off from the rest of the world." In an earlier statement it said it would use "all available means" to end the blockade.

In the main Adriatic port Split, the local military commander threatened an air raid on the city if water and electricity supplies were not restored to his troops, HINA said.

The military closed Split airport to military and civilian traffic.

'Russia alone will handle Japanese relations'

MOSCOW (R) — A senior official from the Russian Federation has said that his republic, not the Soviet Union, would handle relations with Japan and settle a territorial dispute dating back to World War II.

Ruslan Khasbulatov, acting chairman of the Russian Parliament, said it was time to abandon a long-held Soviet position of viewing relations with Japan as those between wartime victor and loser.

"Naturally what we have in mind is Russo-Japanese relations, not relations between Japan and the Soviet Union," he told the Soviet News Agency (I. SS) after returning from Tokyo.

"Consequently, the entire spectrum of problems will be regulated within the framework of Russo-Japanese relations. We are taking it upon ourselves to settle the disputes and sign a peace treaty."

Mr. Khasbulatov said the territorial dispute over four islands occupied by the Soviet army at the end of World War II "should be solved within the framework of preparation for the signing of a peace treaty" and the islands should be demilitarized.

Tokyo has refused to sign a peace treaty or grant substantial economic aid to the Soviet Union until the dispute over the four islands off northern Japan is resolved.

Cuba wants parallel withdrawal of Soviet and U.S. forces

HAVANA (R) — Communist-ruled Cuba said Saturday a Soviet troop pullout from Cuban soil would leave it open to U.S. attack and it demanded a simultaneous withdrawal of U.S. forces stationed at a naval base on the island.

Signalling a widening rift with its long-standing superpower ally, the Cuban government bitterly reproached Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev for "making a surprise announcement Wednesday of talks to withdraw 11,000 Soviet troops from Cuba."

"The unilateral, unconditional decision by the Soviet Union, made without consultation, to withdraw its military contingent, is equivalent to a green light to the United States to carry out its aggressive plans against Cuba," it said in a statement.

Cuba wanted to negotiate a simultaneous withdrawal of the Soviet military contingent and of U.S. forces occupying the Guantanamo Naval Base in eastern Cuba, the statement, published by the Cuban Communist Party newspaper Granma, said.

"It would be immoral and unjustifiable to accept... that a Yankee base and its forces of aggression should remain on Cuban territory while the Soviet military unit withdraws," it added.

The U.S. has several hundred military personnel, including a reinforced Marine company, at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base. Cuba's southeast coast about 1,000 kilometres from Havana.

Cuban President Fidel Castro has called for a U.S. withdrawal from Guantanamo almost since he took power in a 1959 revolution that toppled right-wing dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Cuba said in the statement it was ready to sign an accord on the withdrawals guaranteed by the United Nations which should include confidence-building measures such as an end to U.S. military manoeuvres simulating mock invasions of the island.

The row over the Soviet troop pullout was the clearest sign yet that the 30-year-old Cuban-Soviet partnership, long a thorn in the side of the United States, was finally weakening.

Cuba's government said U.S. President George Bush was rubbing his hands with glee in the belief that Cuba had been abandoned to its fate by its long-time ally, the Soviet Union.

The statement expressed deep Cuban anger and disappointment at the planned Soviet troop withdrawal.

It said the Soviet military contingent in Cuba was a combat-ready and fully-equipped training brigade which had been there since the end of the October 1962 missile crisis.

"Its strength is not numerically significant for Cuba's military defence but it did have a deep significance as an expression of (Soviet) friendship and solidarity in the face of U.S. threats," the Cuban statement said.

It made clear Cuba felt the Soviet Union, its political mentor and main economic supplier, had

caved in to U.S. demands.

"It's clear talks were held and concessions were made to the United States about Cuba, according to U.S. demands, without a single word being discussed with our country," the statement said.

It recalled that Moscow had also not bothered to consult Cuba when it agreed with Washington in 1962 to withdraw its nuclear missiles from the island after a stand-off that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. This had been a "painful and unforgettable" experience for Cuba, the statement said.

The Cuban government criticised as "extremely modest" calls made by Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Fankin Friday for U.S. concessions to accompany the Soviet troop withdrawal from Cuba.

Mr. Fankin sought an arms reduction at the U.S. base at Guantanamo, a reduction in the number of U.S. ships calling there and prior warning of any U.S. military manoeuvres.

Cuba said there was no guarantee the United States would abide by this, "especially now it feels like the owner of the world."

The statement went on to make "really heroic and superhuman efforts" to face the hardships likely to be caused by the changing position of the Soviet Union.

Increasing disruption to Soviet supplies has already worsened shortages on the island but Mr. Castro has said Cuba will never abandon its one-party Communist system.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan prepares law for peace force

TOKYO (R) — Japan's ruling party is preparing to send legislation to parliament next week to pave the way to send Japanese troops overseas for the first time since World War II, newspapers said Saturday. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is proceeding with plans to present a bill to parliament despite the lack of progress in talks Friday with a centrist opposition party, the newspapers reported. The Japanese cabinet is expected to approve Thursday the peace-keeping operations (PKO) bill as the first step toward creating a force to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping activities. Parliament has until Oct. 4, when the current session ends, to approve the legislation. The ruling party plans to push the legislation through parliament with the backing of one centrist party, the Komeito or clean government party, the reports said. A second centrist group, the Democratic Socialist Party, dropped out of negotiations Friday after the LDP refused to include a provision in the bill requiring parliamentary approval to send troops overseas.

5 arrested in murder of Arizona monks

PHOENIX, Arizona (R) — Five men were arrested for the execution-style murders of six monks and three others in a Buddhist temple near Phoenix last month and police said the suspects were high on crack cocaine during the carnage. Maricopa County Sheriff Tom Agnos said one of the men had been charged with nine counts of murder and similar charges were pending against the other four. All five of them, he said, mistakenly believed the temple was full of valuables. Agnos told a news conference that law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration, were seeking three other suspects in the killings at the Wat Phnomkhamm Buddhist temple. Six monks, a novice, a temple worker and the novice's grandmother were each killed with a single shot to the back of the head as they lay face down on the temple floor. Agnos said authorities believed they were shot one by one as each refused to say where the temple's "riches" were. He said the men mistakenly believed there was a vast hoard of valuables and cash in the temple.

Liberian rebels 'invade' Sierra Leone

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — Liberian rebel leader Charles Taylor's forces have invaded Sierra Leone and taken control of an important border bridge, a spokesman for Mr. Taylor said. Mr. Taylor's troops advanced 8-24 kilometres into Sierra Leone to block an attack by remnants of forces loyal to slain Liberian President Samuel Doe, said Mr. Taylor spokesman Ernest Eastman Friday. Mr. Taylor has accused Sierra Leone and the United States of supporting the offensive by Mr. Doe's forces. The United States has denied involvement in the attack against Mr. Taylor's positions, and has supported Sierra Leone's charges that Mr. Taylor's fighters invaded its territory in May. Sierra Leone says Mr. Taylor is trying to force it to cut off support for a six-nation West African peacekeeping force that has blocked Mr. Taylor's advance toward the Liberian capital of Monrovia. Mr. Eastman's statement during a press conference came on the eve of a new round of Liberian peace talks scheduled to be held in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast. He said Mr. Taylor has no intention of holding Sierra Leone territory, but wants to set up a security zone to block further invasions.

Sri Lankan troops kill 10 rebels

COLOMBO (AP) — Government troops killed at least 10 ethnic Tamil rebels during a drive to destroy rebel camps in the thick northeastern jungle, military officials said Saturday. The offensive launched on Aug. 29 is the government's biggest since the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam began their separatist war in 1983. Some 410 guerrillas and 41 soldiers have been killed in the past two weeks. After the fighting Friday, the government said its troops were poised to attack a rebel camp in the northeastern Mullaitivu district of this island nation off the southern coast of India. Troops last month reportedly overran a guerrilla training centre, and the military says there are at least 10 more camps in the jungles, about 200 kilometres northeast of Colombo. The rebels retreated into the jungle after they lost a major battle last month at Elephant Pass further north.

Bush steps up support for Thomas

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush is stepping up his efforts to win confirmation for Clarence Thomas as a Supreme Court justice as the nominee nears the end of his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. A high-tech gift foisted Mr. Bush's efforts to broadcast via satellite a video press release in support of Mr. Thomas and Robert Gates, his nominee to head the Central Intelligence Agency. When the broadcast on the Telstar satellite network failed, the White House released Mr. Bush's statement the old-fashioned way — on video tape. "Now the nation knows what I know — Clarence Thomas is a magnificent American," Mr. Bush said the brief statement as Thomas finished his fourth day of questioning by committee members. "The hearings have revealed his warmth, his grace, his intellectual vitality." "This is no time for special interests to block this important appointment," Mr. Bush added. "As the Senate continues its deliberations, I am confident it will agree that Judge Thomas is the right man for the Supreme Court."

Downed plane 'was missing key screws'

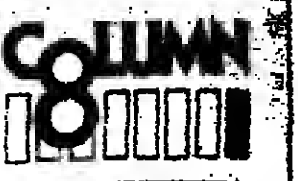
HOUSTON (R) — Aircraft mechanics apparently failed to replace 43 screws on the horizontal stabiliser of a Continental Airlines commuter plane the night before it crashed into a Texas cornfield, investigators said Friday. National Transportation Safety Board chairman James Kolstad refused to blame the maintenance crew for the crash that killed all 14 people aboard, but said that the plane should not have been flying. "Obviously the plane should not have left the hangar without the screws," he told a news conference Friday night in Columbus, Texas, about 120 kilometres west of Houston. On Sept. 11, mechanics were supposed to replace a rubberised de-icer that is part of the plane's horizontal stabiliser on the tailwing, Mr. Kolstad said.

Typhoon Kinna kills 6 in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Typhoon Kinna swept southern Japan with heavy rain and strong winds Saturday, killing at least six people and injuring 22, police said. The typhoon capsized boats, wrecked houses and disrupted electricity supplies. Travellers camped at railway stations and airports as services were cancelled. Japanese Airlines cancelled 37 flights from Tokyo's domestic Haneda Airport, an airport spokeswoman said. Flights from the international airport, Narita, were not disrupted, a spokesman said. Waves up to eight metres high overturned a small fishing boat carrying four people off the southern island of Okinawa Friday. One person was killed, one reached the shore and two were still missing, the Maritime Safety Agency said. The typhoon also killed a woman when her barn collapsed, two people died when their houses fell in and two were killed by flying debris. The Meteorological Agency said Kinna was heading northeast at 50 kph and was forecast to move out into the Pacific Ocean Sunday.

White House backs B-2 Stealth bomber

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House has expressed confidence in the troubled B-2 Stealth bomber despite the aircraft's failure of a key radar-evasion test. "Obviously, we think the B-2 is a good plane, it's a good project," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater told reporters when asked to comment on a Defence Department announcement that the aircraft failed a key test in California on July 26. Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said Thursday that a B-2 test plane had failed to meet strict standards of low-observability to radar detection and the problem had been reported to Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and Congress.



Soviet film wins Golden Lion Award at Venice

VENICE (AP) — The Soviet film Uрга, about a shepherd's trip through Mongolia in search of contraceptives to obey China's birth control law, won the Golden Lion Award Saturday at the Venice Film Festival. Nikita Mikhalkov, known for his prize-winning Oci Ciorne (Black Eyes), filmed Uрга in Mongolia using non-professional actors speaking Russian, Chinese and Mongolian. Mikhalkov said he chose the topic "because people in Russia are now too busy dealing with the past." The film's title refers to a lasso that also is used as a symbol to be buried in front of a test where a couple is making love. Portugal's veteran director Manuel De Oliveira won the jury's special prize for his "Divina Comedia," set in an insane asylum, where demented patients question Western values. The jury divided the Silver Lion Prize among three films — American Director Terry Gilliam's The Fisher King, J'Entends Plus La Guitare (I Can't Hear the Guitar) by Philippe Garrel of France, and Red Lantern by China's Zhang Yimou. The jury also awarded a Golden Lion for career achievement to actor Gian Maria Volonte, the star of Una Storia Semplice, (A Simple Story). The film by Emilio Greco recounted the story of a drug-trafficking police chief investigating himself.

Chinese stamp collection fetches \$3.7 million

LONDON (AP) — One of the world's great collections of Chinese stamps, assembled by Maj. James Starr of Philadelphia, was finally dispersed after a three-day sale which realised £2,201,463 (\$3.74 million). The total more than doubled the best pre-sale estimate. "All the 993 lots were sold which is most unusual in any sale of anything," said auctioneer Richard Ashton as the bidders and onlookers departed from Sotheby's main auction room in Bond Street. Maj. Starr was from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. A large photograph of Maj. Starr in his U.S. cavalry full-dress uniform stood near the rostrum. He was a mining engineer who served in Puerto Rico in the Spanish-American war of 1898 and died in 1948 at age 77. The 24 black volumes which originally held his stamps were behind the rostrum. They had remained in a Philadelphia bank vault since his death until unwrapped last year. The auction house titled the sale catalogue "Hidden Treasures." The stamps, many of them famous rarities and some unique, were sold by Maj. Starr's only grandchild, retired teacher Daniel Blaim Jr., who remained at his home in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Navratilova wants ex-lover to drop any plans for book

FORT WORTH, Texas (R) — Tennis star Martina Navratilova has said she would not agree to pay palimony to her former lover in lower Judy Nelson unless Mrs. Nelson drops plans to write a book about their affair. "Basically I'm tired and disappointed that the only way she seems capable of making a living is somehow through me," Ms. Navratilova said at the conclusion of an emotion-laden four-day court hearing on a palimony lawsuit filed by Ms. Nelson. Both women displayed flashes of temper during the hearing and each burst into tears several times. Ms. Navratilova stormed out of court Thursday, angrily slamming a door after a brief private meeting with Ms. Nelson, a 45-year-old divorced mother of two. She said the case could have been settled out-of-court if Ms. Nelson had agreed not to write a book. "The reason I stormed out of there and the reason the case is not settled is because Judy insists on having the rights to write about our story, or her story, rather," said the 34-year-old nine-time Wimbledon singles champion. "Generally speaking, when you do divorce settlements or whatever, part of the settlement is that there will be no further publicity regarding the matter." But Ms. Nelson said privacy was not the issue. "For me it goes much deeper than that," she said. "It's an American right, my freedom of speech." "That relationship was very special, very good, very healthy," Ms. Nelson said of the affair that began when she met Ms. Navratilova at a Fort Worth tournament in 1984. "She is a very special person in my life."